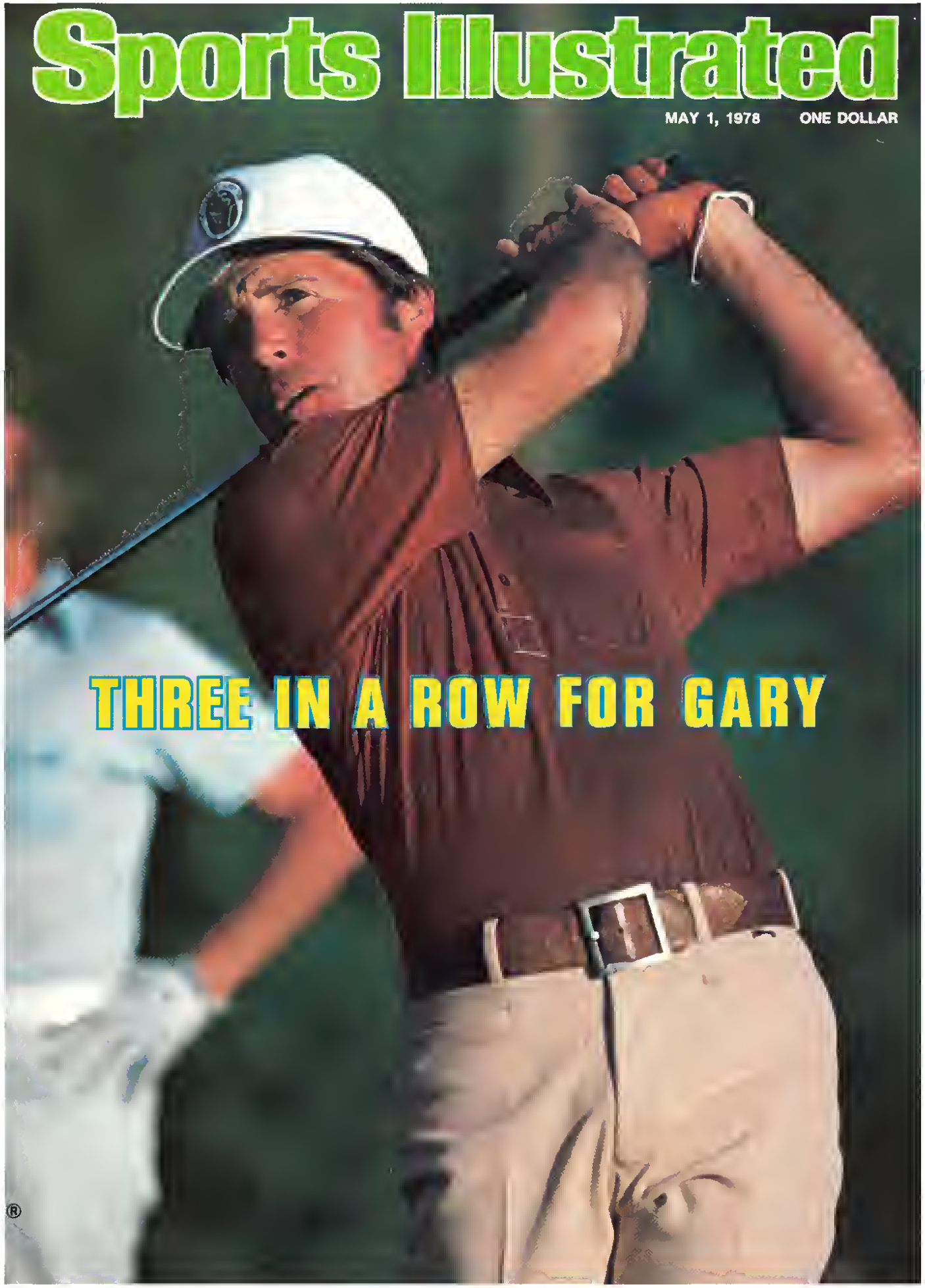
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Next Week

IT IS A CAPITAL DAY on the sports calendar, a day brimming with history and tradition. It also is a day for people and horse watching, and for wild, sweet imagining. Artist Oscar de Mejo paints a singular portrait of the Kentucky Derby.

INTO THE OPEN come track and field athletes for the first big outdoor meets of the 1978 season. Joe Marshall is in Des Moines to report the Drake Relays, while Ron Reid, at the packed Penn Relays, tells the Philadelphia story.

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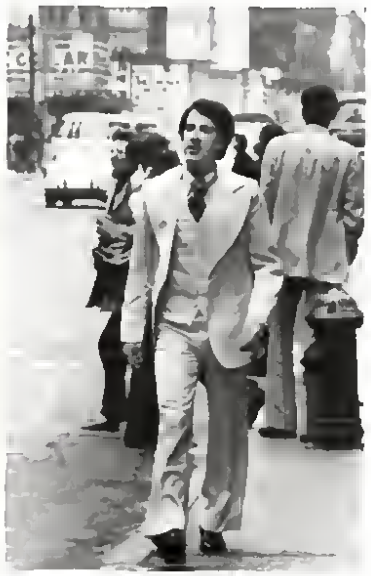
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



NEWMAN SPRUCES UP TIMES SQUARE

In the words of one co-worker, Staff Writer Bruce Newman is "the son Pat Boone never had."

Which makes it odd that this debonair, talented, sartorially splendid 25-year-old should have been seen recently walking down the seedy section of New York's 42nd Street, but the explanation is a simple one. Newman is really a journalistic throwback to the original inquisitive ink-stained wretch. If writing about the Times Square Boxing Club, the subject of his article beginning on page 40, means exposing his three-piece canary yellow suit to a fight gym's smoke and sweat, so be it.

"When I was a kid growing up in Indiana," says Bruce, "Times Square symbolized New York." And New York symbolized big-time journalism, toward which Newman began pointing even as an 8-year-old in Evansville.

"I guess it all began because I had acquired a taste for expensive cigars," he says. "My parents considered this behavior eccentric and cut off my allowance. So I had to seek other means to support my habit." To that end he founded the *First Street Bulletin*, a one-page hectographed neighborhood rag. Newman wrote all the stories—sample: "Pinky Maier is leaving for summer camp Tuesday. We're sure the whole neighborhood will miss her"—sold ads and peddled up to 70 copies of his paper a week at a nickel per. He says he cleared $50 in three summer months. "Of course, it was all in nickels," he says. "Bank tellers became suspicious. They thought I was breaking into parking meters."

Basketball being a pervasive sport in Indiana, Newman had a brief high school career. Newman stands 5' 8". He feels he could have been the white Calvin Murphy since he could—and still can—touch the rim from a standing start, and dunk anything he could get his Little League-size hands around. This did not include a basketball. "Unfortunately no team that I know of plays with a rolled-up gym sock," he says.

It was back to the typewriter. Newman went on to Indiana University, where he covered the Hoosier basketball team and its volatile coach, Bobby Knight, to say nothing of Evel Knievel's Snake River Canyon jump, for the *Indiana Daily Student*. He also interned for a summer at *The Boston Globe*.

But none of these encounters with life really prepared him for the mean streets he found when he came to New York to join our staff in 1975. His first apartment was on a block where much of the movie *Taxi Driver* was filmed, a block one reviewer called "scuzz alley." One night Newman returned from an assignment in Daytona to find that his television set and brand-new Sony Betamax had been ripped off. He left promptly for Greenwich Village, where he now listens to soft jazz and rock, reads P. G. Wodehouse, E. B. White and Raymond Chandler and dines often at the McDonald's on West 3rd.

Newman has written for us on basketball, auto racing and baseball and a good many less familiar subjects, including catapulting, hang gliding, coon squalling and the collapse of an arena roof.

"You might say," Bruce says, "that I have a bent for the unusual."

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Jack Meyer



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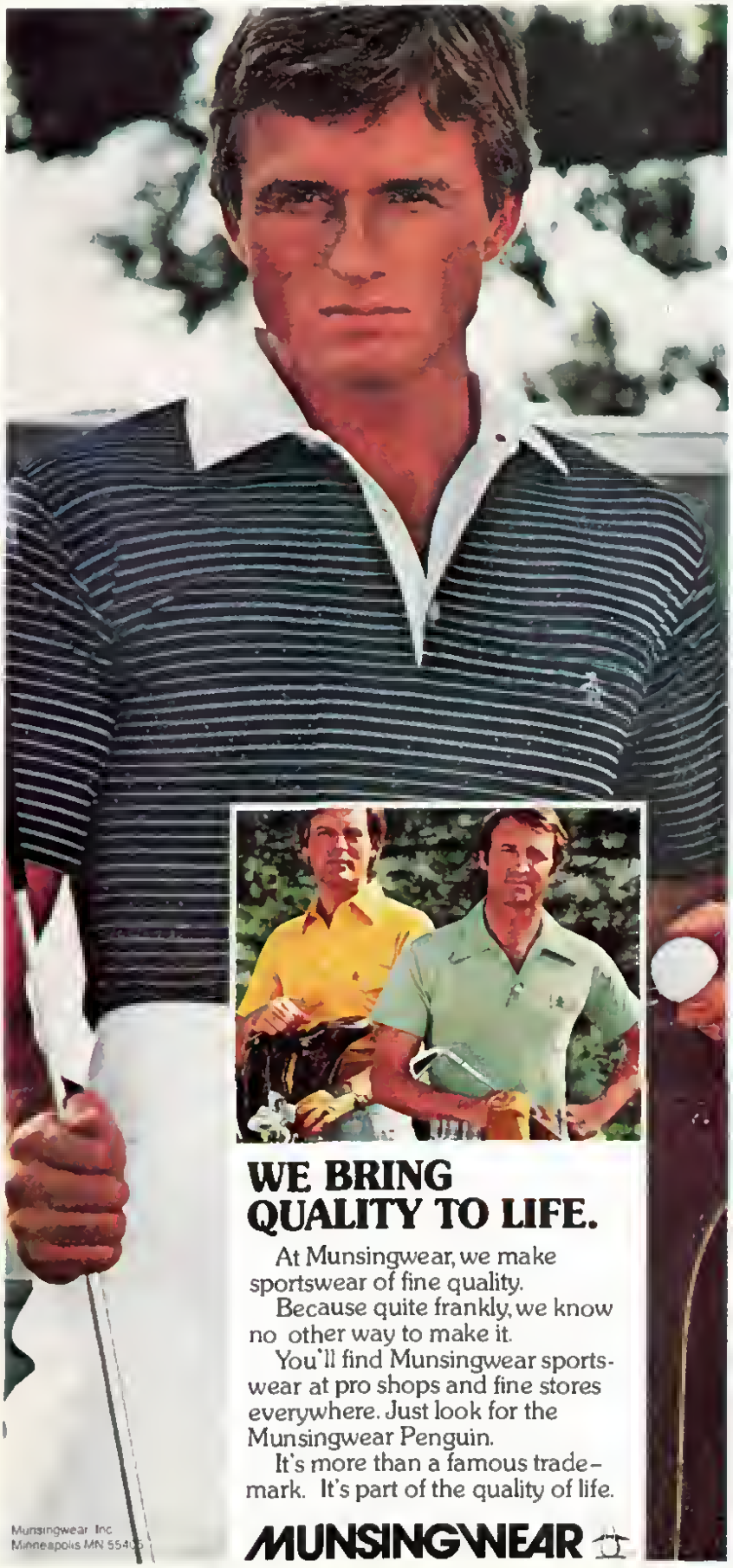
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BOOKTALK

by JONATHAN YARDLEY

OO A TACO HUT ANO LAUNORY MONEY COMPENSATE FOR A BATTERED BODY?

Jay Cronley has no artistic pretensions in his little novel about big-time college football, *Fall Guy* (Doubleday, $6.95). It's a modest tale that offers a modest moral or two, a number of solid laughs and a rather tough-minded examination of the manifold sins committed in the athletic meat market.

The narrator, Ben Elliott, is a big fish in a small pond. He is a superstar high school running back in a Texas country town, a bruiser who augments muscle with finesse and who is the apple of recruiters' eyes from California to Massachusetts. The final contenders for his gridiron services are two fictitious universities that bear suspicious resemblances to Oklahoma and Texas. Their battle over him is wild and fierce, with the stakes being raised each time around, and in the end the Texas school wins. Says Elliott:

"The coach came back and made a counteroffer to both me and daddy, so I signed to play football at his school. It was the hardest decision I ever made in my life. The coach promised daddy, in addition to an auto service center, a taco hut, and if there is anything college kids love, it is tacos. The coach promised me $500 a month laundry money. I remember telling him, 'Sir, I only have four or five pairs of jeans and a few shirts,' and he and the other coaches laughed hysterically. I was a kid with a sense of humor."

He needs one, for college proves to be strewn with pitfalls. There are all those lovely girls, for example, with their energetic ways of expressing their enthusiasm for football. There is the classroom, where Ben wrestles with such weighty courses as "theory of golf" and "theory of basketball." And there is the football field, where Ben's body is shredded like a tearaway jersey. Crack goes the collarbone. Snap goes a leg bone. And poof goes Ben's career.

There is a lot more to the story than this, and much of it is quite funny. In particular, that goes for some of the secondary characters, notably a hulking lineman named Prison Cornelius who has a limited but colorful vocabulary and a large appetite for mayhem; and Rhonda, a buxom cheerleader who goes off to college where she gives up sex for sociology.

In between laughs, Cronley makes some serious points. Ben's father is a poignant example of what can happen to a parent who tries to live through his child, and the hypocrisy of big-time football is devastatingly depicted. You may not fall head over heels for *Fall Guy*, but you'll like it. END



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SCORECARD

Edited by WALTER BINGHAM

THE TROUBLED CHAMP

One thing about Leon Spinks: he does not trot along quietly at the end of a public-relations leash. The WBA heavyweight champion is surrounded by managers and would-be managers, promoters, attorneys and advisers—but Leon doesn't listen to any of them. When the spirit moves him, he dons his gunfighter's black hat and he's gone. Last week was typical. Spinks and entourage were in Miami, ready to embark on a personal appearance tour of the Caribbean. Next thing anybody knew, Spinks had gone over the wall. He popped up in St. Louis, in trouble again.

This will-o'-the-wisp routine has been going on ever since Spinks thrashed Muhammad Ali on Feb. 15 to win the world title. The new champ has been independent to a fault: not once, but three times, he stood up the city of Philadelphia, whose mayor was waiting to present an award; he has canceled, skipped and ignored scheduled appearances. He was late for the luncheon at which *The Ring* magazine presented him with the world championship belt—and he was even late for the contract-signing ceremony in New Orleans, setting up his Sept. 15 rematch with Ali. ("I always tried to be on time when I was champ," Ali said.) Spinks was sued for nonpayment of rent on his Philadelphia apartment and on March 19, the day after the WBC stripped him of half his title, he was arrested in St. Louis for driving without a license, a situation that might have gone unnoticed except that Leon happened to be driving the wrong way on a one-way street. Then came last Friday. This time, St. Louis police arrested Spinks at 4 a.m.—with a female companion, Charlean Gunn—for driving without a license ("Man, I still ain't got none") plus possession of minute amounts of marijuana and cocaine. Possession of cocaine is a felony charge that could mean up to 20 years in prison if Spinks is convicted. The trunk of the car contained several torn-up $10, $20 and $50 bills, which Spinks didn't explain and the police couldn't.

The champ was released after a few hours—two bondsmen almost came to blows over the honor of providing the $3,700 bail—promising to appear on May 5 to enter a plea. He showed up again in Miami, whence he either would or would not depart on the Caribbean tour, depending on how the spirit moved him.

In a how-do-you-react-to-all-this interview with ABC's Barbara Walters, Ali said, "It sounds like a frame-up to me," indicating that somebody wanted to get Spinks into trouble. But what was really bothering Ali should have been perfectly obvious. It wasn't Spinks' welfare, an item that has never bothered Ali before. It was the welfare of that Sept. 15 fight at the Superdome—which Ali says will be his last—and all the millions that go with it. As for the implication from Ali and several other boxing figures that somebody is trying to get Spinks into trouble, it is now clear that Leon can make his own trouble, without help from anybody.

EAGLET

It was a terrible time for Texas, the bald eaglet born a fortnight ago at the Central Texas Zoo in Waco. When he was two days old, he fell eight feet from his nest to the floor, saved only by the leaves and twigs on which he landed.

That near-catastrophe had Centex in a frenzy. Texas was moved into the zoo's nursery, sharing it with a baby camel and two bear cubs. Zoo officials bought an incubator, and a local deputy sheriff flew his plane 100 miles to pick up an eagle expert. Local doctors rushed over with glucose and electrolytes. Zoo employees kept around-the-clock vigil.

It was discovered that Texas had moved too close to the edge of the nest trying to get food. His parents, Ailie and Loma, were not doing the job, eating the pieces of raw quail meat intended for their offspring. Soon Texas was eating food provided by his keepers, but that presented another problem. "If he is kept from his parents too long," said Tim Jones, the zoo's director, "he'll eventually imprint on humans and won't like eagles."

Alas, Jones wasn't able to execute a plan to reinforce Texas' eaglehood. The eaglet died at 10:55 Sunday night.

BLOWUP

The quest for the perfect sneaker may be over. Gideon Ariel, the computer wizard of sports (SI, Aug. 22, 1977), is developing an inflatable running shoe for Pony. Someday a runner will simply slip on his shoe, fill 'er up with air, and, *voilà!*, have a perfect fit. He won't even have shoelaces to tie. More important, the shoe will be good for his feet, absorbing shock better and lessening the likelihood of blisters and shin splints.

Ariel and Pony have been working on the pneumatic shoe for about a year now, and Roberto Mueller, president of Pony,



says it will be at least a year and a half before the first model hits the market. Mueller, who is a little afraid of letting the cat out of the bag, says, "It will revolutionize the business," especially when the shoe invades the basketball and tennis markets. Athletic shoes are now a $2 billion-a-year industry.

The inflatable shoe will be lighter than the conventional model and may only have to come in four sizes—small, medium, large and extra large. Ariel envisions the shoe as having an inflatable insert with a valve that can be filled from a can of compressed air and deflated by pushing in the valve. The laces would be replaced by an elastic band.

continued

Ariel does foresee one small problem: "I can just see a basketball game being held up by a player who says, 'Wait a minute, I've got a flat.' We'll just have to invent the spare."

OOPS II

CBS, which televised the so-called "winner take all" tennis matches in which the winner did nothing of the kind, has received another jolt. *Ski Racing*, a small weekly put out in Fair Haven, Vt., reports that the network pulled a deceptive switcheroo in its coverage of the World Cup races at Stratton last month. In the second run of the slalom, Steve Mahre, who had the best time in the first run, skied before Ingemar Stenmark. He then waited at the bottom of the mountain to see if Stenmark could beat him. Stenmark did not; Mahre won.

A week later, when CBS showed the slalom on its *Sports Spectacular*, the network reversed the running order. As the race was shown, Stenmark went first, then Mahre skied down the course to beat him and win the slalom.

Says Ken Squier, producer of the telecast: "The order was unintentionally reversed. In fact, when I first heard about the mistake from *Ski Racing*, I was positive *they* had made a mistake."

CAN OF WORMS, TO GO

The menu is fast-food—hamburgers, pizza, hot dogs—except for a few curious items at the bottom. Worms, for instance, and fishing gear. The restaurant is Diver Dan's Diner, a 26-foot floating eatery opening soon near Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Bill Osborne, its owner, has long made a living as a commercial diver, but now he is surfacing.

"In warmer months the waters are crowded with boats," explains Osborne. "You can almost walk across the bay on them. And the people out there get hungry. I know. I've been out there and run out of things and wished I had some place to go. Now there will be. I guess my place will be a sort of floating McDonald's."

SORRY

Revenge is sweet, but what Memphis State did to Delta State in a baseball game last week was ridiculous. On Monday, Division II Delta State embarrassed MSU, the ninth-ranked team in Division I, 19–5. Two days later Memphis State scored 11 runs in the first inning, took a 26–0 lead into the fifth and set or tied five NCAA records on the way to a 39–3 win over Delta State. And because the game was played at Memphis State, the Tigers didn't even bat in the ninth inning. The heroes were Third Baseman Doug Granger, who went 7 for 9 and scored seven runs, and Designated Hitter Dave Parks, who was 6 for 8 with eight RBIs and six runs.

Delta State Coach Boo Ferriss, twice a 20-game winner for the Red Sox, said he saw the handwriting on the wall when his second batter hit into a double play, stumbling over his bat on the way to first base.

FOULED FIELD

Soccer's World Cup is less than two months away, but the playing surface of the River Plate Stadium in Buenos Aires, where the big games are to be played, is a near-disaster area. Bare patches and yellow grass greeted SI's Clive Gammon when he visited River Plate last February, but he was assured that all would soon be well with the field, which cost $600,000 to lay. By mid-March what grass there was had turned yellow, and the press was barred from inspecting the stadium. Now it has come to light that the field had to be dug up because of a defective drainage system.

Artificial turf for the World Cup is banned by FIFA, the ruling body of soccer, and the Buenos Aires organizing committee will not comment on whether a new natural surface can possibly be ready for play. There is another, smaller stadium in Buenos Aires, but it would be unfortunate if the big games cannot be played at River Plate, which was designed to be the centerpiece of the tournament.

LUCKY BUCKET

For two seasons the Golden State Warriors, with the backing of San Francisco Bay Area Buick dealers, have offered a Buick Regal to the first fan to sink a basket from midcourt—43 feet—during halftime at a Warrior home game. As of April 8, 57 selected fans had tried, three per night with two shots apiece, and failed. "Usually the ball would land at about the free-throw line," says Bob Bestor, the Warriors' PR man.

On the night of the last home game this season, the Warriors and the Buick dealers decided to throw caution to the winds. They picked 15 fans from the 5,000 who had filled out market-research questionnaires on their way into the Oakland Coliseum Arena, gave each one a single shot, then sat back and watched as the first 14 blew it.

Then Ken Gaal, a 38-year-old college math teacher from Davis, Calif., stepped to the line, the last shooter of the season. He bent his knees, lowered the ball, and lobbed a perfect two-handed chest shot into the basket without so much as grazing the rim.

"The place fell apart," said Bestor. "It was the biggest cheer I've ever heard." said Stephanie Salter, who covers the Warriors for the *San Francisco Examiner*. "My brother spilled coffee all over the people sitting around him," says Gaal.

Later, while awaiting delivery of his prize, Gaal stopped at the showroom of the Buick dealer in Davis to see what a Regal looks like. "I don't care what kind of deal you made, I can top it," said an enterprising salesman.

"Wanna bet?" said Gaal.

FOURSIGHT

Every fall, four high school basketball coaches in northern Michigan—Jim Cooper of Harrison High, Phil Odlum of Alma, Dave Luther of Farwell and Roy Johnson of Beaverton—visit a major-college basketball power to pick up tips from the coach. In 1975 they visited Indiana, in 1976 they went to Marquette, and last fall they went to Kentucky. So what's the big deal? It's this: each college the four visited went on to win the NCAA championship the following spring.

Right now Cooper and his colleagues are trying to pick the school they'd like to visit next fall and thus bless with their good luck. Says Cooper, "Four plane tickets to Duke would make that choice much easier."

THEY SAID IT

• Graig Nettles, one of the four Yankees who were fined $500 for missing a welcome-home luncheon for charity: "If this club wants somebody to play third base, they've got me. If they want somebody to go to luncheons, they should hire George Jessel."

• Raymond Clayborn, New England Patriot halfback, who is back at Texas rooming with Heisman Trophy winner Earl Campbell. "I must answer the phone 25 times a day, and it's never for me. I came to Austin to work on my phys ed degree and I wind up being an answering service." **END**

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NO SUCH WORD



AS CAN'T

When Gary Player won his third straight tournament, it was a triumph for strict dieting and firm purpose. Also a new putting stroke

by BARRY McDERMOTT



Gary Player has something fairly miraculous going for him. Last week the durable South African golfer, doting father and vitamin-powered fitness fanatic, did something no one has ever done before in Houston, Texas—or, taking into account all the ingredients, anywhere else, either. He worked out with barbells, took a putting lesson from his wife, slept through *The Late Show*, watched his diet, hugged his children—and won his third straight golf tournament. With his dramatic victory in the Houston Open at the Woodlands Country Club, following hard on the heels of his previous triumphs in the Masters and the Tournament of Champions, the 42-year-old Player became only the third golfer in the last 15 years to capture three tour events in a row.

This Ponce de León of tee and green has banked $130,000 in the last three weeks, making his wife Vivienne wonder if she should charge on the lesson tee. It was Vivienne who finally persuaded her obstinate husband to try a new putting stroke, and it has turned golden. Player made his share of monsters at Houston, including a 78-foot eagle putt Saturday so long that he allowed "it should have had a passport." But the biggest came on the 17th hole on Sunday, when he nailed a 20-footer for a birdie that drove a stake into the heart of challenger Andy Bean.

After Player walked off the 18th green, his angelic 5-year-old daughter Amanda ran up to him and he swept her into his arms. On the pro tour Player has often been regarded as a curious individual, partial to odd fodder and copybook precepts. In reality he is a splendid human being who has won 113 tournaments around the world, is the best-conditioned athlete in his sport, and is dedicated to golf, his family and his religion. And he is a nice man besides.

Player won at Houston the way he did the previous three weeks, coming from behind and making the shots under pressure down the stretch. He did not have a bogey Sunday, nor did he in his first two Houston rounds. He made three birdies over the final 10 holes, erasing Bean's five-stroke lead in a round of 69 for a 72-hole total of 270, which is 18 under par and the lowest on the tour this season. Bean, 17 years younger, about four feet taller and strong enough to bite the cover off a golf ball, played in the group following Player and could not match him the final few holes, finishing second at 271 on a round of 73.

The victory moved Player into a group with Johnny Miller (1974) and Hubert Green (1976) as the three three-in-a-row golfers of recent times. Player's string is the only one that includes a major championship.

Thus the South African brilliantly continued a crusade that started more than two decades ago when he began battling the evils of high cholesterol and the duck hook on one front, and his somewhat pallid image on another. Player's recent performances—six victories in his last nine appearances around the world—have caused a lot of people to take another look at him. Obviously his life-style, which is ascetic, plus the long shadow of Jack Nicklaus, have tended to obscure his accomplishments. But he has outlasted several generations of peers during his 21 years on the circuit and, as far as anyone can tell, could run through a couple more before it is all over. His victories include nine major titles, which puts him well ahead of Arnold Palmer's seven and at least in the vicinity of Nicklaus' 16, especially since there are two U.S. Amateur's in Jack's total. Besides all of this, Player has not had a sniffle in 10 years.

No one on the tour has the little South African's capacity for work. At 5′ 8″ and 146 pounds, he is a paragon who single-mindedly strives to eliminate anything

continued

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WALTER IOOSS JR.



Young Wayne kidded with not-so-young Arnie

that might interfere with attaining his objectives. His discipline and tenacity are legend. At Houston he slept on the floor, as he has for several months, because of a potentially troublesome lower back. He shunned sugar, white flour, meat, coffee and ordinary tea, and his first meal of the day was literally meal, which he carries with him everywhere, washed down with a special herbal tea. He was in bed—or on the floor—at 10 p.m., faithfully did his multiple exercises and had "practice-range hands" from hitting so many golf balls. And above all he was happy, because for the first time in six weeks he was reunited with his wife Vivienne and four of their six children.

You could reasonably wonder what this man might have accomplished if he did not have to contend with jet lag. It is a 10,000-mile, 17-hour trip from his home in Johannesburg to New York, and this mind-addling journey accounts for a large part of the 5.5 million air miles he estimates he has logged during his career. He arrived at the Woodlands Country Club Wednesday for the pro-am with the scream of jet engines still in his ears, having risen at 5:15 that morning in Orlando, Fla. for the trip to Texas. After working out on the practice tee, he joined a pro-am group that included his 16-year-old son Wayne, who is a scratch player. He gave his partners playing suggestions, signed autographs, posed for pictures, held an impromptu driving contest with his son, conducted an interview, emitted a steady stream of compliments and shot a four-under-par 68 that netted him $340 for a fifth-place tie. This had been his first look at the course. "I haven't exactly given myself the best preparation," said Player when asked if he thought he could win the tournament proper. At dinner that night Amanda fell asleep at the table, exhausted from the trip. "She didn't even make it to the salad," said her mother.

Player went out next day and shot a 64 in the opening round, tying the course record, and added a 67 Friday for a 131 that matched the lowest 36-hole total on the tour this year. On Saturday, however, as tornado warnings circulated, Player ran into a hurricane in the form of Bean. He shot a 70 but Bean had a 66, which gave him a three-stroke lead. That left Player exactly where he likes to be for the final round Sunday—slightly behind the leader—and soon it was all over for Bean. Not a bad windup to three weeks of work for the son of a miner in the South African gold fields who turned professional at 17 and earned $60 a month during his first three years.

Player's streak benefited greatly from a putting tip from his wife, who has been after him for years to discard his characteristic short, jerky stroke for something smoother. On the greens Player has never looked like a champion. In fact, 24-handicappers have offered to give him putting lessons. Player once overheard Hale Irwin exclaim, "I don't know how that man has won over 100 tournaments with that putting stroke." He finally got the message from Vivienne, who he thinks could have been one of the 10 best women golfers in the world had she not gone the diaper route. After Player walked off the 18th green Thursday following his 64, Vivienne said to him, "I ought to kick you in the shins for being so stubborn." It was the first time she had seen her husband's new putting stroke.

Player continues to improve even at his age because he has not lost his enthusiasm. And that may be partly because he takes off three months every year to work his 4,000-acre ranch in Cape Province, about 400 miles from Johannesburg. The layout is called Rietfontein, which means "Where the reeds grow on the river." There Player raises alfalfa and has 50 head of cattle and about 100 horses, including the sire of Welcome Boy, the South African Triple Crown winner, an animal Player believes is the best 3-year-old in the world.

In Houston, Player was unusually happy and relaxed because his family had joined him. Only his 17-year-old son Mark, an agricultural student, and his daughter Michelle, 15, who dislikes flying, were home. In the gallery were Jennifer, 19; Theresa, 12; Amanda, 5; and Wayne, who had his 16th birthday last Saturday. Privately Player is excited about Wayne's potential, even fantasizing that the Player family could produce the first father-son Masters champions. Wayne is a long hitter, built like his father, although his swing is more upright, quite similar to Ben Crenshaw's. "Imagine when he gets to be 18," said Player as he watched one of Wayne's blasts split the fairway. "He might be the longest driver in the world."

Earlier in the week, while Player met his wife and daughters in Orlando and conducted some business, Wayne played a round of golf with Lee Trevino. Albert Salinas, Trevino's friend, told Player, "Lee thinks that with proper guidance Wayne could do anything."

"That's right," said Player, the proud father. "All he has to do is play in tournaments."

During the pro-am round, when Wayne bought a hot dog and smeared it with mustard, Player groused at him, "There you go, eating all that white flour."

"Yeah," said Wayne, "but it doesn't make me dizzy like it does you."

The dizziness had concerned Player for about two weeks. At the Tournament of Champions he suffered a spell on Saturday but attributed it to some spoiled food. But when it bothered him again at Houston he wondered if it might be nerves and the strain of being near the lead so often. Finally on Friday he had a doctor wash the wax out of his ears, hoping it would cure the ailment.

Nothing will cure his obsession with

exercise. In the gym he looks like any 20-year-old in terrific shape. His upper legs are thick and muscular, his forearms are like rope. Offer Player a set of weights and he'll show up for your tournament. At Houston he was a frequent visitor to the Woodlands' Health Club, where therapist Don Schlossberg marveled at him. "I've never seen an athlete in better condition for his sport," said Schlossberg. During a concentrated 45-minute workout with golfers George Burns and Allen Miller looking on curiously, Player whipped through a series of leg exercises, his face red and perspiring, including 300 lifts with a weighted shoe. His goal is to increase that to 1,000 in the next few years. He also worked on his forearms and swung a heavy lead golf club, first with two hands, then with one, forward and backward. Player can grasp the end of the club's grip with two fingers and hold it outstretched. When Paul Meyer, a 205-pound weight lifter, marathoner and former football player who now manages the health club, tried it, the club fell to the floor. Player beamed.

As a young man, Player was a gymnast. The first $50 he ever made was won on a bet that he could walk on his hands around a snooker table. He still can walk 25 yards on his hands and do 25 one-armed push-ups. He looks so healthy that men suck in their stomachs when he is in their presence.

On the way to the press room during the tournament, an official complained that he was putting on weight.

"I bet you eat meat," said Player, who was drinking orange juice and eating an orange.

"Yep," the man admitted, sounding *contrite*.

"I bet you eat sugar."

"Yep." (More contrite.)

"I bet you eat white bread."

"Yep." (Very contrite.)

Then Player told the man about the joys of exercising and, as a final argument, raised his leg and asked him to feel his rock-hard thigh. The official was impressed.

The South African is so disciplined and so dedicated to his regimen that one can almost see the headlines if he slipped off the wagon:

PLAYER EATS WHITE BREAD, SAYS HE IS SORRY.

Player's durability comes into clear perspective when you consider that his victory in the Masters made him only the fourth golfer in history to have won PGA tour events 20 or more years apart. The others are Sam Snead (29 years), Gene Littler (23 years) and Don January (20 years). And Player is the only one to have won a major championship in each of the last three decades.

"And maybe in the '80s, too," said son Wayne.

"Not maybe," corrected his father.

"He always was a fighter and had the desire," recalls former PGA champion Lionel Hebert, who was on the tour when Player arrived in 1957. "When he first came to this country he had a terrible hook. He didn't know how to grip a club. But he's a tiger. He's worked harder than anybody. Money's never spoiled him."

The hook has been his main flaw. In 1973, struggling with the aftereffects of an operation to clear a clogged tube leading to his kidney, Player was on the practice tee following the final round of the U.S. Open at Oakmont. Johnny Miller, the winner, had long since departed the club, but Player, under overcast skies and in dwindling light, continued to pound balls. Now he says he has tamed the hook. "It took me 23 years to learn why I hooked the ball," he says, "but I never worry about it anymore. There aren't any giveaways in golf. And there is only one way to learn something; that is to practice and work. I won all those tournaments swinging the club the wrong way. For hitting the ball, the last two years have been the best of my life. A lot of pros practice on the quiet and then say they don't practice. That's like a man bragging he doesn't go to the office. I'm proud to say that I've been a *hard practicer*. That's *what* I've *tried* to teach my family. That they've got to be hard workers."

Player applies similiar aphorisms to his own life and career. A sampling:

"You are what you eat."

"Part of life is accepting adversity."

"Don't say can't. There's no such word."

"Everything you have on earth is loaned."

"If you're healthy, you're wealthy."

"If you want to be the best, you've got to work harder than the best."

"The healthier you are, the happier you are."

Trite? Not to Gary Player.

And he is a proud man. During the pro-am he hit a big drive, then turned to his caddie, Rabbit Dyer, and made a muscle with his right arm. "Feel that, Rabbit," he said, beaming. Later when he pounded another long one, he called out to Wayne, "Match that one, laddie," and chuckled when his son's drive stopped a few yards short of his.

One of the things he is proudest of is his record. Like Jack Nicklaus, he has never had a bad year. Nicklaus' monumental achievements, however, have been made on the American tour, while Player has sometimes all but disappeared from the U.S. scene, as he did in the years 1966 through 1968 or the three years before this one when he failed to win a tour event. But he has continued to win in other countries, a fact not unknown to the caddies. "They always come to him when they need a loan," says Dyer, Player's regular bag toter since 1970.

Dyer says he plans to stick with Player right on up into the '80s and beyond. "He's taught me one thing," says Rabbit. "Never say can't." **END**



Touring Players grinned for a family portrait



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES DRAKE

In Game One Walton was hobbling and once fell. Three nights later he broke a bone in his left ankle

DOWN GOES BIG BILL, UP GO THE SONICS

With Bill Walton hurting—and then out of it entirely—Portland fell dangerously behind in its NBA playoff battle against Seattle **by CURRY KIRKPATRICK**

Even before the Portland Trail Blazers and the Seattle SuperSonics began their best-of-seven quarterfinal series to determine which team would survive to go on in the NBA playoffs, a lot of questions were bouncing around out there in Drizzleworld.

For instance, was Portland's Bill Walton more crippled in a) his left foot b) his right foot or c) his monologues to the press? Was Seattle's Lenny Wilkens some kind of a) miracle worker b) faith healer or c) just plain lucky?

By the end of the week—after the teams had split the first two games in Portland and the upstart Sonics had whipped the Blue Cross Blazers back at home on Sunday afternoon—only one of the questions had been answered, but it was a terribly important one: all the kumquat juice in the world could not save Bill Walton from reinjuring himself, having his left ankle wrapped in a cast and missing the rest of the playoffs.

When we last unfurled the umbrellas, the Sonics had become the biggest surprise in the NBA after Wilkens took over as coach and the team magically produced 42 victories in 60 regular-season games. With Seattle's tri-pronged backcourt of Gus Williams, Dennis Johnson and Fred Brown outscoring opposing guards by a whopping 154 points to 89, the team had dispatched the Los Angeles Lakers in the first round of the playoffs and seemed on the verge of one of those sprees of emotion and confidence that unpredictably seem to energize some fortunate NBA contender at this time every year; e.g., Phoenix in 1976, Portland in 1977.

Still, the Sonics had only limited playoff experience, and there was some doubt whether the team had poise enough to hold up inside the noisy jaws of Blazermania. This was of grave concern, especially since on their last trip to Oregon, the Sonics had lost by blowing a 16-point lead. "The crowd intimidated us," Wilkens admitted.

As the series began, most of what passed as a league-record ticket-buying throng of 25,995 (the usual 12,666 sellout in Memorial Coliseum plus 13,329 more at five closed-circuit TV sites across the state) wondered how the injured and infirm world champions would respond after a nine-day layoff.

Forward Bob Gross was still on crutches with a broken ankle, but Lucas, Lloyd Neal and Larry Steele all had recovered enough to play, while Walton would be starting at center for the first time in 49 days. The tall redhead began the evening by unloading juice crates from his pickup truck in the Coliseum parking lot. After a tumultuous welcome from his disciples, Walton unloaded on the Sonics, hitting his first five shots and snatching eight rebounds as the Blazers took a 53–46 halftime lead. For a while all seemed peachy in fruit and vegetable land. But it wasn't.

What was really happening was that Walton was grabbing the ball at the defensive end, firing out to begin the fearsome Blazer fast break, then *hobbling* upcourt, where his teammates were hanging around twiddling thumbs and waiting for him to arrive before starting their quick-cutting patterns. When Walton finally got there, the Sonics had beaten the Blazers to their spots, clogged the passing lanes and disrupted Portland's entire offensive program.

This led to interceptions, tipped balls and breakaways, one of which the fleet Williams converted as Walton—at midcourt—attempted to lope after him, then just stopped and shook his head in disgust.

Seattle Center Marvin Webster and the lanky rookie Forward Jack Sikma obviously had been waiting to see just how mobile Walton was; by halftime they had found out. "He was nowhere near 100%, 'bout 70 I'd say," said Webster. "Me and Jack were going to take it to him."

The twin towers of the Seattle front

line, who had combined for only 13 points and six rebounds in the first half, thoroughly wasted Walton and Lucas in the second, ganging up for 29 points and 14 rebounds. Webster was to finish with 24 points while Sikma embarrassed Lucas 18 points to eight

When Walton was replaced by Tom Owens late in the third quarter, Portland led by three points By the time Walton returned, the champions were behind by eight, and immediately Webster blocked two consecutive Walton hooks, spreading chalk dust through his counterpart's red hair. Meanwhile Lionel Hollins and Lucas had 20 misses in 27 tries—and Seattle had an easier-than-it-sounds 104–95 victory.

In addition to their physical woes, the Blazers appeared to be confused, a condition not improved by Coach Jack Ramsay's grim though inaccurate dig at the Sonics. "A lot of teams would have beaten us in the first game," said Ramsay. "Maybe every team." It was Portland's first home playoff loss ever—the team won 10 straight there last year. The Blazers' subsequent two days of practice were equally flat

Walton did not run at all as he rested up for Game Two by polishing his blue Falcon racing bike in the locker room and avoiding the media. "I'm fine," the Portland star would reply to all queries. Or "Ask the coach." Or "Got to go now." Or "You want some juice?"

For his part, Wilkens—a quiet chap with a disconcertingly beatific countenance—was in a unique position. He had coached the Blazers during Walton's first two years, when the big man was chronically injured, and he had drafted both Gross and Hollins before being fired. "I'm not a vindictive person," Wilkens said before the second game "I rooted for the Blazers last year."

At one point last Friday night, it seemed that time had about expired for the Blazers this year. Williams scored 21 points over and around Johnny Davis, and Seattle took a 49–40 lead at intermission. Walton again had started strongly, scoring four quick baskets, but with about 4½ minutes to go in the first half he went up to block a Sikma jump shot and came down all twisted and wrong For the next few minutes he couldn't even wobble anymore. "Get the butazolidin," somebody said as Walton dragged himself off the court for what proved to be the final time in 1978.

But the Blazers are strong-willed, prideful and admirably courageous. Davis redeemed himself with 13 third-quarter points; replacing Walton, the fired-up Owens beat Webster time and again to the glass; and Lucas, displaying some savage, overplaying defense, which must have made Sikma wish he was back on the farm at Illinois Wesleyan, turned the tables on the rookie, 19–8 in points, 14–9 in rebounds.

Even so, the Sonics had a four-point lead, 91–87, with 3:25 remaining and should have been able to hold on to win. But Hollins and Lucas hit key jumpers down the stretch and Portland survived 96–93.

Even before hearing Saturday afternoon's terrible news—Walton had fractured a bone in his left ankle—Lucas said, "We wish Bill could play, but the game goes on. Webster is playing the best of his life, but can he stay psyched against Tom Owens? We can beat these guys without Bill."

That did not seem likely. Not after Webster cleaned off all the backboards; after John Johnson broke out of his series-long shooting slump (three for 17) and began pumping in his funny line-drive shots; after the Sonics out-rebounded the Blazers by an astounding 71–40 to run away and win Game Three, 99–84

It didn't even matter that Seattle shot only 34%. With Walton away, the Sonics could fly—all over the rims. Webster collected 23 rebounds and Paul Silas replaced Sikma to add 13 more, in addition to getting off a few grizzly-bear hook shots. Johnson and Brown took care of the scoring, JJ lining in nine baskets in the second half while the normally Downtown Brown roved up and cross-town as well for 18 points of his own.

Wilkens was asked if this or any other subsequent Seattle victory would be diminished by the absence of Walton.

"Hey, Portland plays too well without him to feel like that," he said. "The thing is to get there and to win. Five years from now nobody's going to remember who played or who didn't. Just who won."

But, hey, Lenny, what about five *weeks* from now? **END**

Webster put an armlock on Lucas in Game Two. In Game Three his 23 rebounds locked up the boards



KEEPING SUPER SABRE UNDER RAPS

Buffalo's Gilbert Perreault is used to being rocked and rolled, but his Stanley Cup encounters with Philadelphia turned up new obstacles and intensified his rivalry with Rick MacLeish, whose assignment was to cool him **by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM**

The word is out on Gilbert Perreault. He is a marked man. Every time the Buffalo Sabres' center ventures onto the ice, they're out there waiting. To keep the explosive Perreault contained, rival centers do awful things: they bump him, they beat a tattoo on his body with their sticks and they chase him everywhere but into the Sabre locker room. By means of these dogged attentions, opponents sometimes prevent Perreault from scoring. Now and then they even sneak in a goal themselves. The only thing that nobody realistically expects is that Perreault can be outskated on the open ice.

One of the few who tries is Philadelphia Flyer Center Rick MacLeish, the man detailed to watch Perreault when the Sabres and Flyers met last week in the Stanley Cup quarterfinals. MacLeish is a speed merchant, too, and the challenge he issued as the best-of-seven series opened was clear enough. "I'm going to play my game, and Perreault will play his," MacLeish said. "I feel I can skate with him." MacLeish then skated with Perreault so well that their duel became the focal point of the series. And in the process MacLeish became a marked man every time *he* went onto the ice.

The rivalry between Perreault and MacLeish goes back to 1970, when both players broke into the NHL. That was the year the Sabres were born, and the expansion club promptly made Perreault its first overall pick in the draft. The Sabres added other strong skaters. Rene Robert and Rick Martin joined Perreault to form the now-celebrated French Connection line. With speed as their trademark, the Sabres became a solid club, but it was only this season, thanks to the inspired play of rookie Don Edwards, that they finally solved their chronic goaltending problem. That raised hopes that they might challenge for the Stanley Cup, a notion that persisted, even though the team finished runner-up to Boston in the Adams Division and then played hot and cold while beating the New York Rangers in a Stanley Cup preliminary series.

If the Sabres really expected to go much further in the playoffs, they obviously needed big things from Perreault, their leading scorer (41 goals) and playmaker. Nobody realized this better than Perreault himself. He is remarkably shy for a star of eight years' standing, but he is scarcely lacking in confidence. "The team counts on me to control the puck and make the big play," he says, "and that's what I do best."

What MacLeish does best, meanwhile, is thrive under playoff pressure. He went fourth overall in the '70 draft, and the team that picked him, the Boston Bruins, traded him the next year to Philadelphia, where he has been overshadowed by do-everything Center Bobby Clarke. MacLeish deserves better. Philadelphia is a hitting rather than a skating club, and from the very start MacLeish was one of the few Flyers who could actually fly. He scored 50 goals in 1972-73 and excelled as the Flyers won the Stanley Cup the next two seasons. Establishing himself as a clutch player, he was the leading scorer in the playoffs both years.

This season, while the Flyers were being supplanted by the New York Islanders as champions of the Patrick Division, MacLeish slumped to a modest 31 goals. Blocking a shot last month against the Los Angeles Kings, he was slashed across the throat by one of Marcel Dionne's skates, a wound that required 80 stitches. After missing just four regular-season games, MacLeish came back full tilt as the Flyers whipped the Colorado Rockies in a preliminary series. He dismissed his injury with grisly humor. "I took a puff on a cigarette," he said, "and smoke came out my neck."

The decision to pit MacLeish against Perreault was made by Flyer Coach Fred Shero, a master at the critical business of matching lines. The home-team coach is always allowed to make the last line change, and since the first two games were in the Spectrum, Shero was calling the shots. Just as important as his decision to use MacLeish against Perreault was his thinking about how to use him. "Shadowing a player like Perreault used to be the thing to do, but I'd like to get away from it," Shero said. "If you shadow, it disrupts your own pattern."

Instead of having his Flyers shadow Perreault, Shero decreed that they would put "obstacles in his course" to prevent him from building up speed. First, the Flyers would forecheck to keep Perreault bottled up in his own end. Then, if he did get up ice, MacLeish would get in front of him and harass him a little. If Perrault got past MacLeish, well, other Flyers would bother him.

In the first game the Flyers followed the boss' plan perfectly. Clarke, Bill Barber and a lot of other Flyers swarmed on Buffalo's defensemen, repeatedly forcing them to surrender the puck. When the Sabres penetrated the Flyer zone, they seldom came up with rebounds. Kept off balance by MacLeish and company, Perreault did manage one nice breakaway, racing to the Philadelphia net for what looked like a sure goal. But Goalie Bernie Parent lunged and smothered the shot with his glove hand.

For his part, MacLeish had no trouble eluding Perreault. Circling at mid-ice like an airliner in a holding pattern, he swooped in at opportune moments for pinpoint landings on the Sabre net. He scored twice against Edwards and the Flyers won easily, 4–1.

MacLeish fared better still in the second game, getting a goal and two assists in a 3–2 Flyer victory. The goal came startlingly when MacLeish, facing off against Perreault to the right of Edwards, decided to try to score on the draw, a stratagem he later called a "one-in-a-million shot." The puck was dropped, MacLeish caught it perfectly and fired a wrist shot past Edwards. Perreault was stunned. "When the puck went in, I think, 'Oh, no!' " he said. " 'Not a goal like *that*.' "

MacLeish was plainly outplaying the Buffalo star, a fact that left the Sabres' rookie coach, Marcel Pronovost, fretting. Pronovost, once a star defenseman with the Detroit Red Wings, concedes nothing to Shero when it comes to making moves. In what everybody assumed was a frantic effort to maneuver his player away from MacLeish, Pronovost kept pulling Perreault in and out of the game for the briefest of shifts. But Shero did

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MANNY MILLAN

not budge. In went Perreault, and MacLeish followed. Out came Perreault, and MacLeish followed. And so it went.

Back in Buffalo for the third and fourth games, Pronovost came in for some second-guessing by the local press. Mainly because of the short shifts, Perreault had been on the ice a total of just 17 minutes in each of the games in Philadelphia, compared with a normal 20-plus minutes. But Pronovost insisted he meant not so much to get Perreault away from MacLeish as to psych up his struggling player. "Gilbert lives on pride," explained Pronovost. "By putting him in for short shifts, perhaps certain things go through his mind. Like, 'Hey, does the coach think that maybe I can't handle MacLeish?' "

Perreault finally got going in the third game. Pronovost was now making the last line changes, and it was with relief that he sent Perreault out, mostly against Clarke and Orest Kindrachuk, never mind that both are more tenacious checkers than MacLeish. The Sabres skated better before the home crowd, and Perreault was almost his old self again, head bobbing and mouth working a wad of gum as he dashed here and darted there. He got in nearly 21 minutes of ice time and early in the third period deflected a shot by teammate Jocelyn Guevremont past Parent to break a 1–1 tie and send the Sabres on to a 4–1 win. The Flyer goal? By Rick MacLeish, of course.

Pronovost actually matched Perreault against MacLeish for several shifts in the fourth game Sunday, but the Sabre star seemed dispirited, no matter whom he faced. MacLeish, still going strong, scored his fifth goal of the series as the Flyers won 4–2 to pull ahead three games to one.

As the teams returned to Philadelphia for Tuesday's fifth game, Perreault conceded gloomily, "I'm going to have to do a better job of watching MacLeish." Indeed, that seemed to be his only solution to a situation that had become rather one-sided. **END**

Circling warily while waiting to pounce, MacLeish (left) not only helped contain Perreault but scored five goals for Philadelphia in the first four games



THESE ARE THE BOSTON MANGLERS

The Red Sox have been crushing the ball again, and Jim Rice and Butch Hobson have been the main marauders

by **PETER GAMMONS**



Hobson leads the league in RBIs, despite elbow chips that he must rearrange before he goes to bat

As Cleveland Pitcher Rick Wise made the cross-field walk from the visitors' dugout to the right-field bullpen in Fenway Park last Saturday, he looked about him. To his left he saw the green monster of a wall that seems to rise just behind shortstop. Up ahead were the bleachers, into which Wise had seen Jim Rice of the Sox deposit 14 baseballs in 20 batting practice swings the night before. "Then I started thinking how many times I'd seen him do that," says Wise. As he worriedly trudged on, Wise glanced up at the left-center-field scoreboard where the Boston lineup, which he would face as soon as he completed his warm-up throws in the bullpen, was posted. At the bottom of the list, in the spot that used to be reserved for pitchers, he saw the name of Butch Hobson, who last season had 30 homers and 112 RBIs. "It's bad enough to see a lineup that's so strong Butch hits ninth," says Wise, who was traded away from the Red Sox a month ago, "but it's another thing to have to pitch to it. I kept thinking, 'What was the line on the Christians against the lions?' "

That afternoon Wise kept the lions at bay, beating his old teammates 13–4 and thereby ending all discussion of whether the Red Sox might go 81–0 in their private artillery range. They had won their first seven games in Fenway, getting 93 hits and 60 runs in the process, and two weeks into the season they were batting .315 as a team, averaging seven runs a game and hitting homers at a pace that would equal last year's club record of 213. And they had done all this in April, when the gusts blow in from Mount Washington toward home plate. Come June, the month when last season's barrage really got under way, the Fenway winds blow straight out. "If people think this is something," says slugger George Scott, "wait until the home-run days. This place is going to look like Vietnam."

What made Wise's victory remarkable—and possible—was the fact that he was able to hold Rice and Hobson to one hit and one RBI between them. The two had combined for seven homers and 24 RBIs and accounted for 32 Sox runs in the previous seven games of the home stand. In a lineup that includes the likes of Carl Yastrzemski, Carlton Fisk, Fred Lynn and Scott, Rice and Hobson have become the muscle on top of the muscle.

When the Red Sox arrived in Boston for their home opener on April 14, there



Spring used to have a chilling effect on Rice. Now contact lenses have seen him to a torrid April

seemed to be someone on every street corner asking, "What's the maatah with the Sawx?" After a winter's buildup, they had begun the season by losing three of five on the road, and fans were already demanding Manager Don Zimmer's velour scalp. The future seemed clouded because of ailments afflicting Rice and Hobson. During spring training Rice had flown to Boston to have his eyes checked, found that they had "seriously deteriorated" in two years and had been fitted for contact lenses. The bone chips in Hobson's right elbow, which had apparently stabilized in late 1977, had started growing again and were now the size of thumbnails. The third baseman missed several spring-training games and began the season bandaged, hitting .156 without an RBI through those five away games. Finally, on a cold day in Cleveland, the elbow had locked up on him while he was walking down the street.

But Boston's dismay disappeared in the Fenway opener against Texas. With the Red Sox trailing 4–2 in the eighth inning, Hobson led off with a homer; soon thereafter Rice tied the score with a single. In the 10th, Hobson got his third hit of the day, and Rice singled him home—if you can call a rifle shot off the right-center-field bullpen wall a single—and the Red Sox won 5–4. The next day Rice had a two-run homer, a double and a single, and Hobson a three-run homer, a double and a single. And on it went. In a seven-run first inning against Milwaukee on April 17, Rice tripled in two runs, and Hobson doubled in two more. Behind 6–2 in the next day's game, Boston came back to win when Hobson tripled in two runs in the seventh inning and began the decisive ninth-inning rally with a single. Hobson's three-run homer broke a 1–1 tie in the next game, which the Sox won 10–4. To finish the streak, Rice first homered and later singled ahead of Carlton Fisk's game-winning home run in a 9–7 win over Cleveland.

And no sooner had Wise gotten the best of Rice, Hobson and the rest of the Red Sox, than the Boston boomers exploded again. In a doubleheader against the Indians on Sunday, in which the Sox won the opener 6–3 and lost the nightcap 10–7, Hobson hit a two-run shot in the first game and a three-run blast in the second. That raised his season's total to 21 runs batted in, good enough to lead the American League, and his batting average to .338. Rice homered with no one on in the second game to run his totals to five home runs, 14 RBIs and a .316 average.

If Rice is the strongest man in the American League, as his teammates insist, that does not mean Hobson is without a distinctive billing of his own. Boston fans now describe him as the Sox' best ninth-place hitter since Babe Ruth. "I'd bat 10th if they wanted me to," says Hobson. Typical. The problem for the newsmen who cover the Red Sox is that these two gentlemen just do not have enough Bill Lee or Reggie Jackson in them.

Both are from the South: Jim Ed Rice is from Anderson, S.C.; Clell Laverne Hobson and his pickup truck are from Bessemer, Ala. Both are quiet. Both spend hours in the batting cage and practicing in the field, though Rice for the

continued



time being is primarily a designated hitter. Both are strikingly handsome; teammates used to call Rice "Mandingo," while Hobson is Paul Newman with a Reggie Jackson body. Both are tough—"gamers" in baseball argot. "We're paid to play," says Rice, who makes 125,000 honest dollars. Says Zimmer, "Neither of them ever has a complaint or an excuse." But while Hobson's background is one of tradition—he was a quarterback under Bear Bryant, and his father was MVP on Bama's 1953 Orange Bowl winners—Rice created his own tradition. The city of Anderson altered its school integration plan just to get him into previously all-white Hannah High.

From the day he arrived in Boston in 1974, it was obvious that Rice, who was then only 21, had a chance to be that rare hitter who can combine brute force and finesse at the plate. And he has lived up to those expectations, batting .303 with 87 home runs in his three full major league seasons. It is no wonder Rice's eye problems were a considerable source of concern. He now wears contacts four hours a day, including during games. "They're supposed to stabilize my eyesight," he says. "Thus far I've had a little irritation, but no big trouble. I can't worry about them. I've got pitchers to worry about."

"If he can hit .320 with 39 homers without the lenses, as he did last season, maybe he'll hit .340 with them," says Zimmer, greedily. But Rice's condition continues to be a matter of concern to the Red Sox; only if his nearsightedness can be compensated for will he be able to continue his quest to become the game's best hitter. He's not far from that goal now. Asked what player he would take if all American Leaguers were made free agents, Milwaukee General Manager Harry Dalton said "Rice" without a hesitation. "I can't imagine another answer," said Dalton.

The asset that leaves general managers drooling over Rice is his strength. Sox telecaster Ken Harrelson likes to tell Jim Rice golf stories, particularly one in which Rice hits two drives of more than 400 yards in the same round. Dr. Cary Middlecoff and Hubert Green would not believe that yarn until they saw Rice whale one off the back tee. Now they say Amen. Standing alongside the batting cage, you can actually *hear* Rice's bat whistle through the air as he takes his shortstride, shortstroke cut. During a game in 1975, Rice checked a hard swing so abruptly that the bat snapped in half, the top half almost decapitating Zimmer in the third-base coach's box. "In my 30 years I've not only never seen anything like that," says Zimmer, "I've never heard of it, either." Rice has had tape-measure homers in every park in the league. Just before the late Boston owner Tom Yawkey died, in 1976, Rice hit a ball over the center-field wall and out of Fenway. Yawkey claimed it was the longest shot he had seen in seven decades of watching games in Boston.

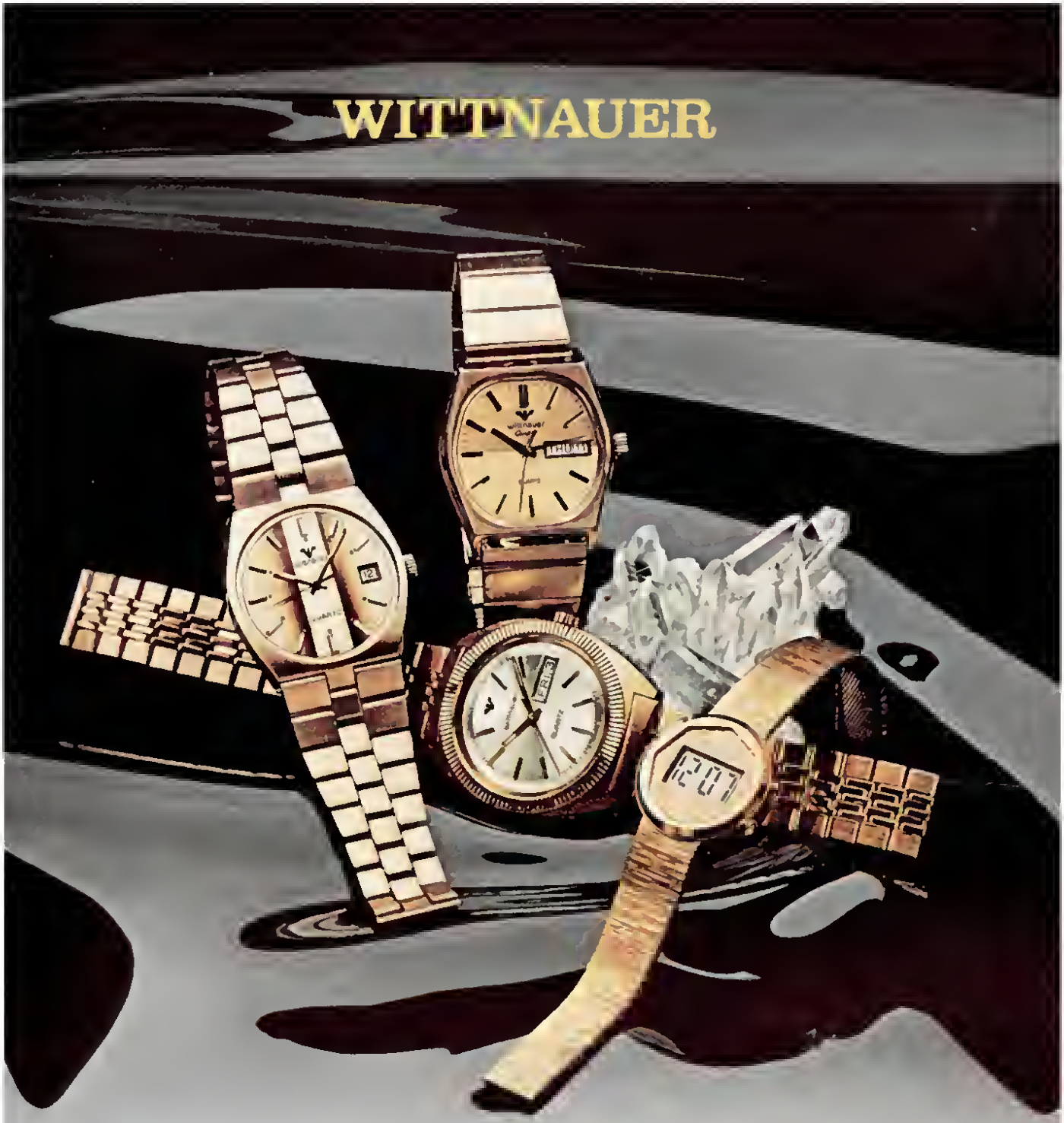
As the wind shifts from in to out, Fenway's fans can expect to snag even more bleacher reachers

The 10th inning game-winning "single" in this season's home opener was another example of Rice's strength. Ranger Pitcher Len Barker, whose fastball has been clocked at 98 mph, tucked a heater under Rice's chin. "I just tried to make contact and fight it off," says Rice. The ball hit the wall 380 feet away. "Anyone else would have been left with a broken bat and arthritic hands," says Harrelson.

Rice's 87 career homers include a league-leading 39 in 1977, but the long hours he spends underneath the bleachers batting against the pitching machine have made him a lot more than a slugger. His 382 total bases in '77 were the most in the league since 1940. Last year he became the first American League player since Mickey Mantle in 1955 to reach 20–10–30 figures in doubles, triples and homers. He had 29 doubles and 15 triples—despite the fact that no one is supposed to hit three-baggers in Fenway—to go with his home runs. He was first or second in every clutch-hitting statistic the Red Sox devise for use in contract negotiations. "I know I still have a lot to learn about hitting," he says, "but I'm really a hacker. If I see a pitch I like, I'm not going to wait. People say, 'Don't swing at the first pitch so much,' but that's the way I am. I'll get better, but I won't change."

His big improvement this year may well be his fast start. In each of his previous major league seasons Rice has gotten off slowly. Last June he was hitting in the low .260s, but then went 31 for 57 in 14 games and was on his way. "I can't remember starting like this on any level of competition," Rice says. "Why this

continued



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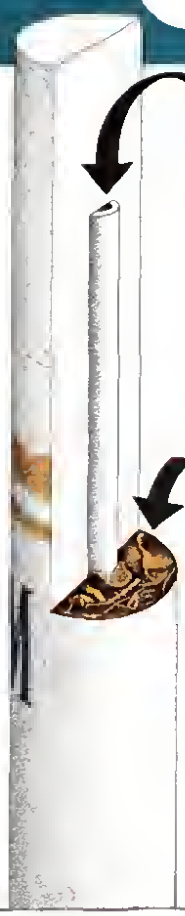
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year? I don't know. Sometimes I think slow starts can be caused by wearing yourself out before the season begins. This spring I tried to go at my own pace." After an exhibition season that included more eye examinations than hits, Rice broke out in the final preseason game against the University of Florida. He tattooed the college boys for two homers and eight RBIs in three at-bats and said, "I'm ready."

While Rice's hallmark is his strength, Hobson's is his toughness. His right elbow is in such bad shape that he has to have it elaborately wrapped before every game. Only the heat retained by the bandage keeps the elbow from locking. Between innings, he often must use his left thumb to press down on the elbow and rearrange the chips so he will be able to hit and throw. "It hurts a lot," he says in his Alabama drawl, "but it takes a lot more than pain to get me out of the lineup." Hobson says he regards every game as if it is "Alabama against Auburn," and by diving for ground balls, sliding headlong into bases and crashing into catchers, he shows he means what he says.

Though he is only 26, because of his determination and attitude Hobson is the most respected member of the Red Sox. When he first came to Boston, there were doubts about his fielding. In one season he made himself into a third baseman of a rank just below the Yankees' Gold-Glover, Graig Nettles. "He wears out us coaches," says Johnny Pesky, one of the men Hobson calls on to hit practice grounders by the gross. In a stretch of four games this season, Hobson made half a dozen brilliant plays. And though he strikes out a lot—162 times in '77—only Rice and Fisk can equal his clutch-hitting performances on the Sox. Last season 14 of Hobson's homers came after the seventh inning. With 16 RBIs in the first 13 games this year, Hobson appears to be headed for another 100-RBI season—if he can avoid having to undergo elbow surgery.

And he may not stop at a mere 100. As if pitchers who get trapped within the walls of Fenway Park don't have enough to think about, they now must ponder the possibility of a ninth-place hitter leading the league in runs batted in. In no other place will they yearn more for the good old ante-DH days, when the last spot in the order was filled by someone like Dean (.026) Chance. **END**



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PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICH CLARKSON

MIKEY AND ME

by A. M. F. PACER III
as told to JOE MARSHALL

The overlooked holder of the indoor and outdoor pole vaulting records is doing a slow burn because humans like Mike Tully are getting all the acclaim

So you're writing an article on Mike Tully, the UCLA senior who set the world indoor pole vault record of 18′ 5¼″ at this year's NCAA championships. Well, you've come to the right place. I know Tully better than anyone. But before we go any further, I'd like to set something straight. That world record belongs to me, not Tully. Because I'm the pole that Mike used that afternoon in Detroit, I consider that record mine. Frankly, if you had any brains, you'd be writing an article on me, not on Tully.

I know what you're thinking—that it's the vaulter, not the pole, that makes the difference in my event. Well, if that's true, how do you explain the fact that I also hold the outdoor pole vault world record? That's right. I was the one who carried Dave Roberts over the bar at 18′ 8¼″ during the 1976 Olympic Trials. I belonged to Earl Bell then. Earl and Dave were going for the world record at the Trials when Dave's pole snapped. So Earl loaned me to him, and on the second jump we set the record.

I can tell you with all due modesty that I am the greatest pole in history. In fact, Tully's accomplishments are a testament to my value, not to his vaulting prowess. When Earl gave me to Mike last year, Mike had cleared 18′ 2½″ for the first time only a few weeks before and had just finished second at the NCAA Outdoor Championships. The first time Mike used me was a week later, June 11, at the AAU Championships in Los Angeles. He won there with a jump of 18′ 2″. Since then he's cleared 18′ 4″ in four meets, which makes him one of the world's most consistent vaulters. Late last summer we teamed up to win the World Cup in Düsseldorf on a vault of 18′ 4½″.

This year Mike and I set an indoor record of 18′ 4″ at the opening meet of the season, the Muhammad Ali Games in Long Beach, Calif., and then broke that record at the NCAAs, the last meet of the indoor season. Nice symmetry to that, you have to admit. In between, Mike set a sort of unofficial world record for the highest opening height when he passed at a meet in Toronto until the bar was at 18′. Naturally, he made it. That's the kind of confidence Mike has in me.

You'd think with performances like mine Mike would at least give me a nickname. But no. I think he's trying to keep all the glory for himself, because he keeps calling me by my uncatchy flex designation, 5.75. That means that if I'm stretched out horizontally and 50 pounds are hung at my middle, I'll sag 5.75 inches. That's stiff when you consider that I'm about 16′ 6″ long, weigh less than six pounds and am hollow. In fact, I'm so stiff that you've got to be real fast and strong to use me effectively. You've got to be world class.

Officially, I'm an AMF Voit Pacer III 500/88. That's just one of 52 different models that Voit makes. The 500 refers to my length in centimeters, and the 88 means I can support 88 kilos (194 pounds). My frame, which is 70% glass and 30% resin, is clothed in white plastic tape with red and blue trim. Mike has further adorned me with about 15 inches of white ankle-wrapping tape where he holds onto me. Being just two years old, I don't have any distinguishing scars or marks. And I intend to keep it that way. We poles will last forever if handled with care, but one good scrape or scratch and we break easily. And a vaulter who weighs more than 194 pounds could break me. On a red band at my very top is a warning similar to the one the Surgeon General requires on packs of cigarettes. Mine reads, "The weight specified on this pole is a maximum which should not be exceeded."

Despite my record, I never get any recognition, not even from my friends. For instance, Earl Bell, my first owner, says the key to Mike's success is his plant. It doesn't occur to Earl that the key is Mike's pole—then again, maybe Earl is sore because I never gave *him* a world record. I will admit that the plant is crucial. It is made up of three separate parts. At the same instant that the vaulter's foot hits the runway on the final stride of his approach, he has to get his right hand, which is the one higher up on the pole, straight up in the air and the bottom of his pole smack into the back of the box. If these three actions aren't perfectly synchronized, even I can't help a vaulter. I guess Earl has a point, because I have to admit that lately Mike's been doing a much better job coordinating these three elements than any other vaulter.

But those three things all take place on the ground. After that it's all me. Look at Mike's record vault. All he did was sprint 125 feet down a runway and plant me in the box. I had to do the rest. First, because I had 6′ 3″, and 190 pounds worth of Tully hanging on one end of me, while my other end was jammed solidly into the box, I bent a full 90 degrees. A fraction of a second later, I straightened up right in front of the bar. At that point all Tully had to do was let go and drop over the bar onto a nice fat cushion.

Don't get me wrong. Mike is a great guy. Everyone will tell you that. You can't help but like him. He's polite, quiet, modest, the all-American boy. The girls in his high school class voted him Mr. Muscle. But he's like all other vaulters—he never thinks of his pole as anything but a necessary evil. It's a measure of the disrespect vaulters have for their

continued

There's Mike hanging on while I do the work, but I like the picture because my name shows for once


TULLY

poles that Earl would loan me to Dave and then, even after I'd set a world record, give me to Mike.

I sometimes wonder where Mike thinks he'd be without poles. When he was in high school, he flew all the way from his home in Long Beach to compete in the U.S. Junior Championships in Gainesville, Fla. Only the plane ran over his poles or something, because when they came out to the baggage claim area they were flat as pancakes. That was it for the U.S. Juniors.

It seems like the only time vaulters ever talk about their poles is when they complain about what a hassle we are. I'll admit that lugging a bundle of fiber glass tubes—world class vaulters use different poles for different heights, can you imagine me being used at 15 feet—from track meet to track meet takes a little patience. When you travel with me, you have to plan carefully, because I don't fit in DC-9s or any Eastern Airlines planes except the L1011. And Mike always has to have a lot of rope on hand to strap me to the top of taxis. Sometimes he almost has to use that rope to lasso a cabbie; those guys tend to disappear when they see us coming. You ought to hear the way all pole vaulters, not just Mike, carry on. They're always talking about inventing the collapsible pole.

Like most vaulters, Mike rarely has anything to do with me in practice. He lifts weights two or three times a week and occasionally does some gymnastics to help him develop control of himself in mid-air. But mostly his workouts resemble those of a sprinter, he does a lot of what he calls "flying 50s" and "flying 75s." "Pole vaulting *is* a sprinting event," Mike keeps telling people. "It's a matter of how much speed you get on the runway. The faster you run, the higher you jump." He also says that carrying a pole slows him down about 15%. Yeah, and not carrying a pole would lower his best jump about 18′ 5¼″.

Sorry, sorry, I sometimes get carried away about my lack of recognition. You want to know more about Mike. He says he might like to get into acting when he's done vaulting. The only problem is that Hollywood has already done the role for which Tully was typecast and Robert Redford got the part. The character was Hubbell Gardiner in the movie *The Way We Were*.

Hubbell was the all-American college boy, an intelligent jock with California surfer good looks. He was even a track star. Hubbell's only problem was that "in a way things had always come too easily for him." The movie sort of broke down when it tried to show Hubbell in later life, when things were no longer coming easily. Mike would have as much trouble as Redford did summoning up the right emotions for that part of the role. As Tom Jennings, Mike's coach on the Pacific Coast Club, says, "Nothing bad ever happened to Tully. To him a tragedy is losing his poles." Things always seem to come easily for Mike.



The turtle is a loser, but Mike treats it like a king—while I'm left alone in an equipment room

To prove it, you don't have to look any further than his vaulting. He didn't even take the event seriously until he was a junior at Millikan High School in Long Beach. By the end of his senior year he was already the best high school vaulter in the nation, and that summer he tied the second-best high school vault ever with a jump of 16′ 8¾″.

Up to that point Mike's only coaching had come from some vaulters he trained with—Steve Smith, Bob Richards Jr. and Casey Carrigan, who set the high school record of 17′ 4¾″ in 1969. And no one would have accused Mike then, or now, of killing himself during workouts. His most revealing statement on training is, "I think rest is a very important thing."

Mike didn't get any real instruction until his freshman year at UCLA. The Bruin field events coach at the time was Tom Tellez, who is now the head track coach at the University of Houston. "Tellez taught me how to pole-vault," Mike often says. "I didn't know what I was doing. I just did it. With Tom I learned why to do things."

In his freshman year Mike added 13¼″ to his personal best and set a world junior (19 and under) record of 17′ 10″, which still stands. But it took him almost two more years to get over 18′. Mike always tells people that the 18′ barrier meant nothing, that it was just a matter of time, but Bell says it was really hanging Mike up. I agree with Earl. Mike jumped 18′ for the first time in an indoor meet in Toronto, and those of us who were near the pit that night heard him let out a yelp when he finally cleared it. But then he caught himself, reverted to character and went into his normal victory routine, which is to hold one finger tentatively up in the air. Earl says it makes Mike look like he's scratching his head more than celebrating.

Another thing that comes easily for Mike is winning at UCLA. In his entire college career he has lost only one dual meet. That happened during his freshman season, and on that day Mike had jumped as high as the other guy. He just had more misses

Mike's real teammates have always been the members of the Pacific Coast Club, not Bruins. He got on the team back in high school, and now, though at 21 Mike is still the youngest member

of the club, he is second in seniority to Francie Larrieu.

Mike is known to his PCC teammates as Mikey. That's after the kid in the cereal ad on TV. You know, "Let Mikey try it. He'll eat anything." Mike doesn't eat food. He inhales it. Tully likes the nickname. He has even taken to signing his autograph "Mikey Tully."

But don't get the idea that Mike doesn't like college. He loves it. He'll tell you, "I wish I could stay in college all my life. I'm having such a good time."

When you think about it, who wouldn't want to spend his life in college if he could do it the way Mike is? His athletic scholarship contains an allowance for room and board. On winter weekends when his roommates head off for greater downtown Westwood, Mike goes to places like New York and Toronto to compete before thousands of people. And in the summer, instead of working construction to earn pocket money, he hopscotches around Europe with the PCC. Mike's parents, both schoolteachers, have never been overseas, but Mike has spent four full summers touring 15 European countries.

As for the days he spends on UCLA's campus, well let's just say being a college senior is another thing that comes easily for Tully. He has invented a new twist on that old line about your buddy's girlfriend's roommate—you know, "She can cook and play the guitar and all the girls love her." Well, Tully plays the guitar, and his roommates call him Betty Crocker because he likes to bake cakes, although that seems to be the limit of his culinary skills. And all the girls *do* love him.

Tully's strenuous daily routine includes a class or two (just to get the few hours left to meet the qualifications for a diploma), some Frisbee, a workout and the pursuit of meaningless relationships. The high point is a visit to the Westworld Electronic Amusement Center. If practice makes perfect, Tully has a future as a pinball wizard.

And then there are the turtle races. Every Thursday night Mike and his three roommates enter their turtle, Son of a Beach, in races at a local watering hole named Brennan's Pub. Once a year there is a big runoff at Santa Anita, where the purse is $500. That's one reason that Tully and friends keep the turtle. The other is the fact that a lot of girls come out to watch the races. Unfortunately, Son of a Beach hasn't been holding up his end of the bargain. Most of the time he just tucks his head inside his shell and squats on the starting line, pretending to be a rock. Maybe he's embarrassed about his name. The big winner lately has been Whips 'N Chains.

And annually, or thereabouts, there is a good old-fashioned college prank. About this time a year ago there was a big stir on the UCLA campus when someone hung a six-foot blue shark from a tree limb over Bruin Walk. The prankster was never caught, but I have my suspicions. Consider these facts. Mike has a book on sharks; the weekend before the shark was treed Mike went fishing way out in the Pacific; even though Mike loves his sleep, the night before the shark was discovered his bed was hardly slept in; and although he goes to the campus only when absolutely necessary, Mike ambled down Bruin Walk that morning for no apparent reason. As I said, I have my suspicions.

And you better listen to me, because you won't learn anything about that shark or much else by talking to Mike. Not that Mike's stupid, mind you. Far from it. He's going to graduate next December with a degree in psychology that he got without benefit of tutors or courses in beach blanket bingo. It's just that he's an introvert. In fact he's about the quietest athlete on the track circuit. His PCC teammates are always needling him, saying, "Mikey, you're just another pretty face." I told you Mike wants to get into films. Well, as far as I'm concerned, his chances of making it in the movies went out when talkies came in.

Even when Mike does talk, it's difficult to pin him down. Ask him about the future and he says things like, "I want to find something as exciting as jumping, most likely a job." Mike just lives day to day, and that's why he's continually doing things that surprise even the people who know him best. In the past year, for instance, he's tried hang gliding, parachuting and sky diving, but he hasn't made a regular practice of any of them. As his father says, "Mike's just diddling around."

And he'll keep on diddling for a few more years. In that time Mike plans to get a stockbroker's license, a real-estate license, a pilot's license and set up a lot of other options for the future. But mostly he plans to jump. He still has some goals in vaulting. He'd like to hold all the world records, which means he has to set the outdoor record to go along with his junior and indoor marks. He'd also like to win a gold medal in Moscow.

As for me, the greatest pole in the history of vaulting, I might go anytime. Poles break, you know. And they get run over by airplanes. If you're so set on doing an article on pole vaulting, you better write about me and do it fast. Mike is going to be around for a while. **END**



Mike generally watches out for me, but airports and taxis can put a strain on our relationship

RAGS SAYS HIS SYSTEM FIGURES TO BRING RICHES

What's a nice Harvard boy doing in a cramped Greenwich Village office with all that info on the horses?

by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

Len Ragozin, thoroughbred handicapper *extraordinaire*, hates to be interrupted when he is working. This puts him on a collision course with the horseplayers who trudge up to his cramped office on the fourth floor of an elevatorless building in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. While his visitors shoot the breeze in one of the office's two rooms, Ragozin sometimes retreats to the other. A lean, bookish figure in wire-rimmed glasses, he usually has barely settled in at his drafting table, an eye-shade on his head and a calculator at his fingertips, when somebody intrudes.

"Say, Len, I was wondering. . . ."

"Knock!" screams Ragozin. "Don't sneak up on me like that!"

Ragozin's diligence is a fearsome thing, and it has helped lift him, at last, out of obscurity. For two lonely decades Ragozin, a Harvard graduate who estimates his IQ at somewhat more than 170, toiled in the certain, but largely un-



shared, knowledge that he was the king of the speed handicappers, a breed that tries to beat the horses without knowing a fetlock from a bag of oats. Ignoring conformation and backstretch gossip as well as such factors as breeding and the reputation of jockeys and trainers, speed handicappers rely instead on elaborate mathematical calculations known as "numbers," "figures" or, more formally, "speed ratings." They believe that their numbers, which are based on horses' past performances, accurately indicate what those horses will do when they race again. But while Ragozin *knew* his numbers were the best, he had trouble proving it.

As he tells it, he would make cool and brilliant calculations at sundown only to lose his shirt at daybreak. "Jitters at the ticket window," sighs Ragozin. More recently, he enjoyed some lucrative results by using his numbers as guidance in operating his own claiming stable, but the pressures of being a horse owner apparently got to him, too. At any rate, it is with ill-concealed relief that he has lately been phasing out the stable. "The figures can be perfect but they still have to be interpreted," Ragozin explains. "My style is to sweat out decisions. I just don't handle myself well at the track."

Maybe Ragozin doesn't do well at the track, but a couple of years ago he started supplying numbers to people who *do*. It was a masterstroke, and at 49 he now finds himself doing a thriving business advising horse owners and bettors. The nice part is that he doesn't have to bet or claim horses himself, or even go to the accursed track. He simply waits in his office as the customers climb the three flights to beg, borrow and buy his numbers.

The uses that Ragozin's followers find for his numbers vary. Dennis Heard, a bearded Brooklyn businessman, has taken Ragozin's cue and is using the numbers as the guiding factor in the operation of a stable he started in 1976. In his second year Heard finished 17th in the nation with $448,029 in purses, and he raves, "Len's figures are terrific. I wouldn't dream of buying horses without them." Another satisfied customer is Constantine Merjos, a onetime symphony bassoonist who uses Ragozin's figures in preparing a tout sheet he peddles at New York tracks under the name "The Beard." "Len's numbers are the best," Merjos gushes. "They're tremendous." And finally, the numbers have become golden to some two dozen horseplayers, who complain of being brazenly set upon at the track by other wagerers anxious to learn how Ragozin's customers are betting, and worse, of being robbed of their winnings on the way home. This makes them reluctant to be identified, but it also demonstrates, they say, how nicely they're doing. And one of them, a chain-smoking fellow named Lou, rhapsodizes, "There can't be any better numbers than Len's. He's the only person who could put out such numbers."

Ragozin readily concurs. Delighted that his speed ratings have won such enthusiastic, if belated, acceptance, he estimates that bettors using them wagered upward of $10 million last year. And he shows visitors tax receipts attesting to some huge scores, notably a $59,710 trifecta payoff on the now-infamous race last Sept. 23 at Belmont won by Lebón, the 57-to-1 shot who apparently was not Lebón at all. Ragozin's customers also have suffered some spectacular tap-outs, but Ragozin counters that Lockheed and Penn Central have lost more. "We do all right. What can I say?" he says. "In fact, we do better than all right."

That Ragozin manages to run any kind of a business out of his office is a wonder. The place is not only inconvenient but also hopelessly cluttered. It is piled high with *Daily Racing Forms*, overburdened with filing cabinets and littered with unwashed dishes. Over here is somebody's bundle of dirty laundry, over there is a lone sneaker pining for its mate. The place also bears the marks of Ragozin's penchant for puttering and tinkering. "I like to fix things," he says, which may or may not explain the lamp held together by a huge wad of Scotch tape. When Ragozin turns 50 in September, some well-wishers might be tempted to buy him a new lamp. Those who know him better will buy him more tape.

Then there are the bettors who congregate in the place. Drawn in large part from Manhattan haunts like the Chess & Checker Club, the Mayfair Bridge & Backgammon Club and other gaming parlors, Ragozin's customers sometimes seem more interested in swapping palindromes, puns and puzzles than in winning at the races. One insider insists that each of them secretly yearns to claim a horse named Vengeance that runs on the New York circuit. Then the new owner would have the satisfaction of climbing the steps to Ragozin's office, flinging open the door and announcing triumphantly, "Vengeance is mine!"

Ragozin is obviously at ease in these surroundings. In fact, he also lived on the premises until a year ago, when he rented a nearby studio apartment, conceding that the office was a touch too crowded for sleeping *and* working. There is a leak in the ceiling of the new apartment above the place Ragozin chose for his bed. He diverted the water by running some rubber tubing from the ceiling to the window. As a result, he says, "When I'm in bed, it looks as if I'm being fed intravenously."

One thing Ragozin doesn't joke about is his business. The beloved numbers are his life. It is a mere biographical sidelight that Ragozin and his wife of 18 years ("Or is it 20?" wonders the numbers man) have long been separated and that he has a 10-year-old daughter, Alexa. It is no more than a curiosity that he plays the five-string banjo and swims more or less regularly ("I go daily—once a week") at the 23rd Street YMCA. The numbers are the thing to Ragozin. "I think about them all the time, 24 hours a day," he acknowledges. "I groove my mind to them. I turn myself into a computer."

What makes the numbers so vital to Ragozin is his conviction—one shared by all speed handicappers—that before you bet on one horse to beat another, it helps to know how fast both can run. Past-performance charts list clockings, of course, but the real worth of each performance is obscured by such things as whether the track was slow or fast, how much weight the horse carried and how far he ran from the rail. All serious horseplayers make seat-of-the-pants allowances for these variables, but speed handicappers crave precision. As Ragozin puts it, "We're trying to find out the true value of a horse's performance. In other words, when is a fast race really worse and when is a slow race really better?"

Ragozin goes about his task with the help of five part-time assistants, including a nationally ranked postal chess player named Gary and a dollar-a-point Scrabble whiz named Rich. As these people toil in the crowded office, it is sometimes necessary for them to move around sideways and on tiptoe, like matadors. Nevertheless, every day they manage to produce analyses of the performances of all the horses running at as many as seven tracks—from Aqueduct to Hialeah, from Bowie to Santa Anita. They also

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PHOTOGRAPH BY HARRY BENSON

study winners' times at a dozen other tracks. This can mean 1,000 analyses a day, and Ragozin's crew comes up with figures on them all.

The job starts with the collection of relevant information on each race. This includes wind direction and other weather data. Because racetracks are often located near airports, Ragozin has an airline-weather Teletype machine in his office, where the hourly weather readings are rolled onto spools that he fashions out of Tinkertoys ("He's the only businessman I know who writes Tinkertoys off his income tax," says one office regular). Ragozin also has a network of correspondents who phone in daily reports on track conditions and how much ground each horse saved or lost. His informants include the four-sheet man, Constantine Merjos, who times New York races. Ragozin is particularly glad to have Merjos' clockings, because official track times are not always accurate.

Ragozin has a formula to reduce what he calls the "snowstorm of data" to a speed rating. His calculations are painstakingly done, as evidenced both by his annoyance at being interrupted and by signs on his office wall reminding him of the tricky twists and turns to be heeded at tracks around the country. The computations result, magically, in a number. In Ragozin's rating system, the lower the number, the better the horse. Numbers range from zero for a Forego or a Secretariat to the high 20s or even 30s for a plug. "The figure is the ultimate distillation," Ragozin says with a flourish. "It's my $E = mc^2$, my Picasso sketch."

But Ragozin doesn't stop here. He records every horse's career on its own lined sheet, placing the horse's successive numbers—5, 19½, 23, 17½ and so on—in such a way as to form a graph. This, Ragozin says, instantly reveals meaningful patterns. Does the horse achieve his best numbers early in the season? Is he improving from year to year? Does he recover quickly from an all-out effort? Ragozin says you can learn more about a horse's condition from "the sheets," as everybody calls them, than you can from any trainer. "When I look at the sheets, a visual picture of that horse leaps to mind," he says. "This helps tell you if the horse is ready to run well. That's the idea—to know whether a horse is reaching a peak or receding from one."

The sheets are Ragozin's stock in trade. If a bettor wants to play Aqueduct, Ragozin pulls from his files sheets on all horses entered at the track that day and runs off copies on the Xerox 3100 he has somehow found room for in the kitchen, near the weather Teletype. Off to the Big A goes the happy horseplayer, presumably to rake in the dough. Of course, it is at this point that Ragozin came to grief as a horseplayer, and it is at this point, too, that four bettors using the sheets can come up with four different horses in the same race. They deliberate in what, to them, is horse talk. "That horse has been running 20s, but I think it'll take an 18 to win this one," one will say. Or "Do you think that 13½ took too much out of him?" Or "Looks to me like he's ready to run a 16 today."

Despite their differences in interpreting the numbers, devotees of Ragozin's sheets insist they enjoy an edge over other bettors. It is in setting his fees that the otherwise efficient Ragozin suddenly loses his firm grasp of numbers. Discussing prices on the phone recently with one of his problem clients, Ragozin said dolefully, "Listen, I know you're not doing well right now, but I think I should be getting more. I ain't going to take you to court but think about it, will you?"

Hanging up, Ragozin slumped into a chair. "I'm no businessman," he sighed. "I hate haggling over prices."

Ragozin has some relatives who were businessmen—and others who were anything but. In fact, his family couldn't get together on too many things—including its name. Len's uncle was Israel Rogosin, a prominent industrialist and founder of Beaunit, a textile corporation. Len's aunt, Rachel Ragozin, was a charter member of the U.S. Communist Party. Len's father stands somewhere in the middle. He was for many years a top executive in Beaunit, where he was known as Harry Rogosin. But he also was a "progressive capitalist" who admired his sister Rachel and called himself Harry Ragozin when he was away from the office. He and his son equivocate even today. On page 1,116 of the Manhattan phone book they are listed as Harry and Len Ragozin; on page 1,162 they reappear as Harry and Len Rogosin.

Long before Len enrolled at Harvard, he had enthusiastically embraced his aunt Rachel's politics. Known around the yard as "Rags," he spent most of his time playing poker and working for various Marxist causes. After graduation in 1949, he became a researcher at *Newsweek*, but it was the McCarthy era and FBI agents kept stopping by to chat. Concluding that his political views foreclosed a successful career in Establishment journalism, Ragozin quit *Newsweek* and plunged, even more incongruously, into the Sport of Kings. His father, a weekend horseplayer, had devised innovative speed ratings, and Harry offered to pay Len a small sum to maintain the numbers for him.

Len got hooked and soon was visiting tracks all over the East, refining his dad's numbers and trying vainly to beat the horses. He fleshed out his income playing poker (at which, by all accounts, he *did* win) and with odd jobs, including, briefly, an editorship at a medical publishing house. He tried writing a handicapping column ("Rag's Pickings") in the Boston *Traveler* and peddling tips through the mail, but neither project got anywhere.

It was not until 1972 that Ragozin's perseverance began to pay off big. Going over the numbers on a claimer named Sunny and Mild, he saw something he liked. At his son's urging, Harry Ragozin claimed the horse for $15,000. Winning stakes races with claiming horses is unusual, but Sunny and Mild won the Queens County Handicap that year at Aqueduct in what was then track record time. Harry gave his son $22,000, one third of the stable's profits, and Len began claiming horses for himself. He did it strictly by the numbers, without bothering to look at the horses. Trainers existed simply to carry out his orders.

"But Len, you ought to see that horse," a trainer would protest. "He's got a knee the size of a balloon."

"I don't care what he *looks* like. My figures say that he's ready," Len would answer.

The stable twice won more than $200,000 in purses and, Ragozin says, actually turned a modest profit for a couple of years. Frampton Delight, which Ragozin claimed for $26,500, won two stakes in 1976—the Gallant Fox and the Display Handicaps, both at Aqueduct. In all, Frampton Delight won $135,000 for Ragozin. His stable is now down to four horses, but Ragozin made an enduring impression on Maryland-based trainer, King Leatherbury, whose 322 victories last year were tops in the nation. "I was skeptical about Ragozin's figures at first," he says, "but they seemed to work. He'd

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tell me. 'This horse just ran a big race and I don't expect him to go good next time.' I'd say just the opposite. Sure enough, he'd be right."

An even greater leap forward came when, at a party in 1971, Ragozin met a man known today as the Bomber. An unassuming, vaguely patrician fellow, the Bomber, now 32, had been student-body president at a Midwestern university and had earned a law degree but never practiced before the bar. Ragozin introduced his new friend to the sheets, and the Bomber soon was betting heavily, sharing Ragozin's faith in the figures while also exhibiting poise and daring at the track. Ragozin agreed to bankroll him and share winnings and losses with the Bomber, and both men say that business has been streaky but profitable.

The Bomber specializes in trifectas, in which the bettor must pick the first three horses in their order of finish. He typically uses the sheets to find a promising long shot and then "keys" on that horse—betting it in most or all possible combinations. It was the Bomber who brought home the score on the South American horse identified as Lebón. That horse first ran in the U.S. on Sept. 9, finishing 11th in a field of 12 on the dirt at Belmont. But Ragozin says it was a deceptively fast field and that he gave Lebón a fairly respectable 22½. When Lebón ran on the grass at Belmont on Sept. 23, the Bomber was at the track with the sheets. There were four horses in the race that had consistently earned numbers between 16 and 19, but the Bomber reasoned that, because it was late in the season, at least a couple of these horses figured to peter out. Therefore a performance of 19 or so by Lebón would put him in the triple. South American imports sometimes do good things on grass and—well, anyway—the Bomber keyed Lebón on each of the 900 $2 trifecta tickets he bought. When the 57-to-1 shot, running what Ragozin later assessed as a race worthy of a 17½ speed rating, led Li'l Tommie and Georgetown to a stunning 1-2-3 finish, the Bomber found himself holding two tickets worth $29,855 apiece. Lebon turned out to be a ringer, but Ragozin and the Bomber insist that whatever dark doings might have led others to bet on him, *their* good fortune was strictly an intellectual achievement.

The Bomber generally bets between $8,000 and $12,000 a day, and it is his conspicuous use of the sheets that has attracted many of Ragozin's new customers. However, the only other bettor wagering on the Bomber's scale is a looming, dark-haired figure known as the Big Man. A druggist's son who was a nationally ranked contract bridge player a few years ago, he and the Bomber have a natural rivalry going, which made for a competition of sorts when SPORTS ILLUSTRATED visited the track with each of them.

It was not even close. The outing with the Bomber took place at Keystone in Philadelphia. His bankroll bulging in a pocket of his plaid shirt, the Bomber fastidiously laid out the sheets on a table in the clubhouse. The bulge soon disappeared. The Bomber did not cash a ticket all afternoon and lost $8,000. He showed remarkably little emotion. "That happens every two weeks or so," he said in his Volvo during the ride to New York. He spent the evening reading a mystery novel in his apartment.

The Big Man's turn came two weeks later at Hialeah. Unlike the Bomber, he laid out the sheets in utter disarray. Betting roughly $1,000 a crack, he lost the first two races but had a grand on a winning 5-to-1 shot in the third and cashed two trifecta tickets worth $1,400-plus each in the fourth. After pocketing $4,400 on the perfecta in the sixth, he slyly mentioned the Bomber. "He didn't cash a ticket?" The Big Man wound up winning $24,000 for the day and left the track worrying about muggers.

There are times when Ragozin, sequestered in his Greenwich Village office, gets a hankering to make a few big-money selections himself. The results are generally disastrous. A while ago a well-heeled horseplayer asked for a tip, and Ragozin, hoping to interest the man in the sheets, gave him what Ragozin thought was a hot one. The fellow bet heavily and the horse lost. When the man phoned, Ragozin was crestfallen. "I feel bad, I really do," he grieved.

The man said soothingly, "Don't worry about it, Len. It was one of those things."

"Lemme feel bad, will you?" pleaded Ragozin. An hour later he was still brooding. "I'm sick. I should've said no to the guy. It makes it seem we're not as smart as we think we are."

Len laughs, Len cries. Describing himself these days as a "parlor Marxist," Ragozin admits, "There's always been a conflict between my politics and horse racing. It's utterly horrendous to me that so much money is tied up in something with so little social validity."

Ragozin remains close to his father but the two sometimes clash. Harry once criticized his son for breaking a soft-boiled egg with a knife and then eating it with a spoon. "You're dirtying an extra utensil," he complained, and a lively argument followed. There was a worse scene the day Len, visiting his parents' West Side apartment, blurted out to his father, "You got me involved in horses because I figured to outstrip you as a person. It makes me less of a threat to you." Harry angrily threw Len out of the apartment.

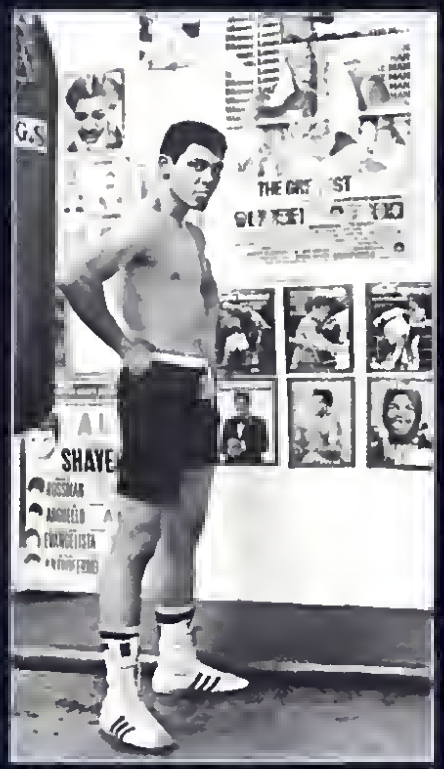
The moment passed and Harry, a cheery man of 75, admits, "I've sometimes wondered whether I did the right thing with Len. But the handicapping is something he's always wanted to do. And it seems to me he's enjoying it."

And, of course, he is. The demand for his sheets has brought Rags some riches, and he finds added pleasure in the fact that the Bomber and the Big Man, heavy hitters though they are, refer to him as "the Boss." Their reliance on Ragozin was underscored when both bettors were at Hialeah at the time of January's big blizzard in New York. Ragozin had been sending the sheets to Miami each night by air express, but the storm closed all of New York's airports and highways. Faced with the prospect of having to bet without the sheets, his customers were in a state of panic that regulars call the "Ragozin twitch." "What you have here are two desperate men," the Bomber said over the phone. Somehow a train left Penn Station for Baltimore at 2 a.m.—five hours late—and Ragozin put a young woman aboard with the sheets. She arrived in Baltimore at dawn and caught a flight to Miami in time for the first race. Both the Bomber and the Big Man won that day.

Apparently, triumphs just weren't meant to come easily for Ragozin. At least that is what he was telling the crowd of horseplayers at his office one afternoon. "What I'm doing here is hard work," Ragozin assured them. "This isn't the carefree life of the horseplayer you get in Damon Runyon. When people casually say they're beating the horses and try to make it sound easy, I have to laugh." And he did laugh. So did the members of his entourage. Then Ragozin got up and went over to the drafting table to do some work. **END**



Scotty Scott mops up at the door and on the floor.



Middleweight John (Ali) Perez mukes like his idol.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MANNY MILLAN

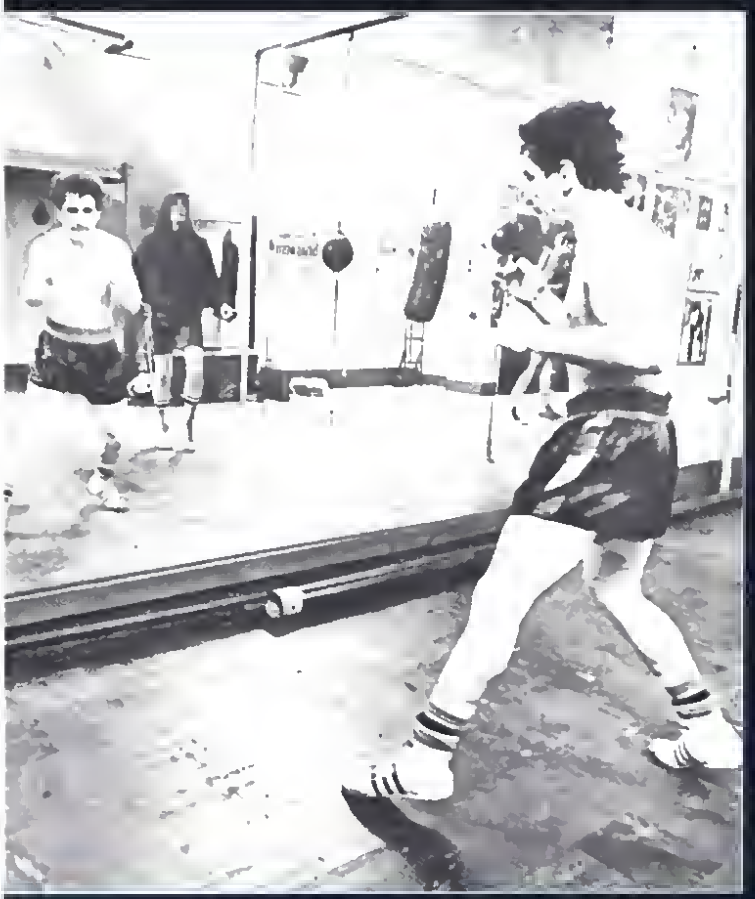


NEW HOPE ON THE STREET OF DREAMS

It's too early to call it a big success, but the Times Square Gym sure beats anything else playing on 42nd Street

by ***BRUCE NEWMAN***





Reflecting on his lackluster career, Rocky Orengo keeps punching.

Until it fell into disuse and finally closed in 1959, Stillman's Gym on Eighth Avenue in New York was boxing's foremost institution of higher learning. For nearly 40 years it was the city's most celebrated school of hard knocks. During the palmy days of boxing, 375 fighters trained regularly at Stillman's. It was headquarters for champions like Joe Louis and Rocky Graziano, and it was a haven for an assortment of bums, too. Even during the most difficult of the Depression years, this collection of kings and cauliflower heads evoked the feeling that boxing—at least at Stillman's—was a growth industry.

But the gym never was exactly redolent of prosperity. The joint smelled bad and looked worse. In Stillman's there was spit, but no polish. The place was so filthy that, according to one veteran trainer, "fighters could not train at the gym without fear of contaminating themselves." Lou Stillman, the pistol-packing dean of the University of Eighth Avenue, ran the campus with an iron fist and an indifferent feather duster. "The golden age of prizefighting," Stillman used to say, and not without feeling, "was the age of bad food, bad air, bad sanitation and no sunlight."

It would be an exaggeration to say that the climate in fight gyms has improved substantially since then. Boxing is a sport remarkably resistant to change. The game either hasn't gotten the word on cross-ventilation or has chosen to ignore it. What passes for air in a boxing gym swims with body odor, the pungent smell of liniment, the aroma of disinfectant and the stale smoke of too many cheap cigars. The smell hangs above the ring, the punching bags and the jumble of bodies. It is in these close quarters that boxing

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lives not in Caesars Palace or any of the other Las Vegas hotels among which the heavyweight division divides its millions.

The newest of these sweatshops is the Times Square Boxing Club, located fittingly in New York's Times Square. The gym is owned by Jimmy Glenn, who has attended to the brightwork in a fashion uncommon to both his breed and the neighborhood. Glenn's gym is outfitted with six heavy bags, three speed bags and an almost spotless new ring set close to the window. Passersby on 42nd Street if they look up three stories can take in a free show of young fighters sparring. And while that may not sound like much of a show, it's worth a glance because it is from chrysalises like the Times Square Boxing Club that champions emerge.

To get to the gym one must first shoulder through young jackanapeses slouching in the doorway selling "loose joints," a product that is no miracle cure for arthritis. Up two flights of stairs, past a tavern and a formalwear shop, and you are there. But you are not in until either you have convinced Scotty that you have a compelling reason to be there or you have forked over a dollar, the standard charge for spectators. The admission fee is waived for fighters' wives, girl friends and children, who are assigned to a small waiting area. Many of the Latin fighters bring entire families with them to the gym, the wives sitting attentively while the children do raucous roadwork around the heavy bags.

Scotty is 62-year-old William Scott, at one time an electrical contractor on Long Island and more recently a maintenance man for a string of pornographic movie houses in the Times Square area. Scotty left his Philadelphia home at 23 and has never returned. For a while he prospered in New York, but eventually life began body-punching him. "At one time in my life I made big money, *giant* money," he says. "But I lost it all drinking and gambling and chasing women."

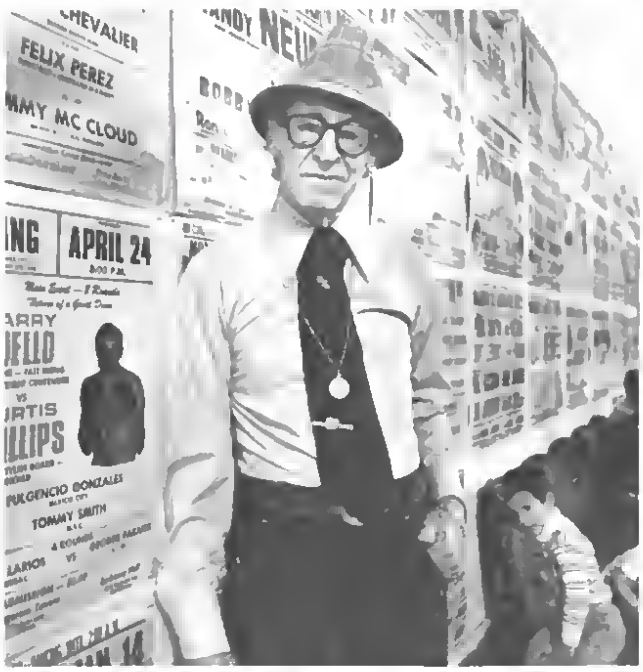
For seven years Scotty lived in a small apartment above the Love Theater, an establishment whose marquee promises FIVE SEX ACTS ON STAGE. A falling-out with the management of the Love left Scotty in a position to seek other career opportunities more suited to his amiable disposition. That was when he met Jimmy Glenn.

Glenn is also the proprietor of Jimmy's Corner, a bar situated in the middle of a block on 44th Street. Thus the name reflects Glenn's longtime affection for boxing, not the tavern's location. Glenn fought professionally as a middleweight for three years and later became a cornerman for Floyd Patterson, when Patterson met Muhammad Ali at Madison Square Garden in 1972. He also ran a community-center gym at the Third Moravian Church in Harlem for 20 years, until the city finally tore the building down.

Glenn is fully aware of somewhat similar wreckage in his new venture as an independent businessman in Times Square. The area has been overrun with porno theaters, dope pushers, peep shows, massage parlors, prostitutes and all the miseries attendant on so-called victimless crime. Forty-second Street was once the "street of dreams," and it radiated the heat of genius. As a story in *The New York Times* noted, "so important was 42nd Street that theaters that were actually on 41st or 43rd Streets had entrance passageways to 42nd Street so that their marquees could be part of the glamour and excitement of that street."

The swells no longer congregate under those marquees, and the street of dreams now traffics in despair. Reedy-voiced evangelists hand out leaflets for the Lord and declaim, "We are a doomed civilization, brother, just look around you." Derelicts distribute handbills for a nearby place that offers "$10 encounter sessions—no tipping, no ripoffs, no extras." They wink and grin and in a boozy conspiratorial whisper say, "Hey, man,

continued



Pop's posters give the gym atmosphere, and owner Jimmy Glenn predicts that someday Times Square will be beautiful again.



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check it out brother, check it out

Looking through the large front window of the Times Square Boxing Club, Glenn seems unaffected by all the exotic fauna swirling by his doorstep. "My place will be good for this neighborhood," he says. "Right now you can't walk across the street without someone trying to sell you heroin, a reefer or a hot watch. But we're going to have good clean-living kids coming in here to train, and it won't take long for the crumbs to get the message that they're not wanted around here. Someday Times Square is going to be beautiful again."

On one of the gym walls is a sign that said NO SMOKEING, until somebody with a diploma smudged out the E and reduced the charm of the place by a vowel. Across the room is another sign that reads: RUBDOWNS—SEE VICTOR. RATES REASONABLE. THE BIGGER THE BOOY THE MORE YOU PAY. The air is as breathable as New York air ever gets, and the floors are swept clean.

The late-afternoon and early-evening hours are the busiest for most boxing gyms, and at 5 p.m. there are perhaps two dozen fighters in Glenn's. The air is loud with the thump of gloved fists pounding the heavy bags, the relentless chattering of the speed bags and the bolo whistle of jump ropes as they spin above the linoleum floor. A bell rings every third and fourth minute, signaling the end and beginning of simulated rounds, and fighters respond to the round-opening bells with violent explosions of air from their nostrils as they commence shadowboxing.

Near the ring, where two Puerto Rican fighters are sparring, 83-year-old George Albert is taping old boxing photographs to the wall. Albert has been around boxing for 70 years and is known to his juniors—which is practically everybody—as Pop. It is an article of faith in boxing that any gym worth its smelling salts must have a little old man named Pop shuffling around. Gives the place atmosphere. If an elderly guy doesn't drift in off the street under his own steam, you go out and hire one.

"We're gonna be up to our rear ends in pictures," Pop says, wedging a John Garfield between a Willie Pep and a Henry Armstrong. "I gotta be careful I don't get no bums up here, even though some people, who shall go nameless, don't care who they've got hanging from their walls. Jimmy says most of the kids who come in here to work out don't know who most

continued

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of the old fighters were anyway. But I say a gym needs photos like these. To this day I still get a thrill when I walk into a joint with a picture of Carmen Basilio on the wall. What a great fighter that guy was."

Two fighters who rarely miss a day in the gym are Irish Paddy Dolan and Rocky Orengo, both lightweights and both trained and managed by Glenn. Dolan is 22 and drives a truck for a beer distributor. With hard work and some luck, he could be a contender for the lightweight championship in three years. Rocky is 33 and unemployed. Boxing is the only occupation he has ever had, and he believes he can still win the title. Though the careers of these two fighters seem to be headed in opposite directions, it is the boxers' common purpose that indicates what fight gyms and boxing clubs are all about.

Dolan has gained a sizable following in New York's Irish community. During one of his most recent bouts, a member of Dolan's clamorous retinue leaped to his feet and implored his fighter to "show 'im you've walked on green grass, Paddy me boy." Dolan, naturally, has encouraged this identification with the Emerald Isle by wearing green trunks and gloves in the ring and by driving a customized green van out of it. Ironically, not only has Irish Paddy Dolan never trod on the ould sod, but his mother is Italian. Dolan, of course, did not invent the practice of putting his roots where they would do him most good. "I'm just lucky my parents didn't decide to name me Pasquale or something like that," says Dolan.

Rocky Orengo started boxing at smokers in his native San Juan when he was 12 years old. He has fought professionally for 22 years, living on short-money purses from which he always deducts a share to send to his six children in Puerto Rico and their mother, from whom he is divorced. The 5′ 4″ Orengo has been mainly a professional opponent—someone who puts up a good, workmanlike struggle before getting knocked down. In spite of that, he has never abandoned hope that he'll be a champ.

"I love the people," Orengo says. "Sometimes I love the people too much for my own good. Once I lose a fight I should win because the kid I am fighting, well, he is only 19, and I don't want to hurt his career. That is love. Still, I should be a better fighter than I am now. I lose many fights because I am drinking too much, and I don't train hard. But I don't lose no more. I have a bad record, but I am working very hard now every day in the gym, and I believe in God. Every night I pray. In two years I will be champion. I am very sure of this."

Just then the lights in the gym blink off, and for a long moment the room is illuminated only by the eerie glow of Times Square. Presently someone shouts that it is quitting time, and the lights flicker back on. Orengo looks disappointed but heads wearily for the showers. In boxing, you learn early to accept this most fundamental precept: when the lights go out, it is quitting time. **END**

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Col. Meriwether Lewis Clark, Jr, fathered the Kentucky Derby in 1875 in the hope of reviving a thoroughbred industry devastated by the Civil War. He succeeded beyond his wildest imaginings

On the eve of the 104th running of the Derby at Churchill Downs, Kentucky has the richest thoroughbred nursery and sales arena in the world. At last July's Keeneland Association sales in Lexington, 309 yearlings were knocked down for a total of $26,769,000; an average of $86,631, up 28 percent from 1976.

Since colonial times, this country has been importing fine Irish, English, and European blood-horses to enrich the breed. Now increasing numbers of them are crossing the ocean the other way.

"The dollar isn't worth much any more but we have the best horses in the world and they have become a form of international currency," says Preston Madden, a top market breeder and master of Hamburg Place where his grandfather bred five Kentucky Derby winners.

In the late 1860s when Clark first started to worry about the situation, even the most royally bred Kentucky yearling could be bought for around $100 Since the early 1960s, several hundred yearlings have been sold for $100,000 and up, up to $600,000 in 1973 for Wajima, a colt from Bold Ruler's last crop; up,up,up to $1,500,000 paid in 1976 for Canadian Bound, a colt from the first crop of Secretariat, Bold Ruler's most illustrious offspring.

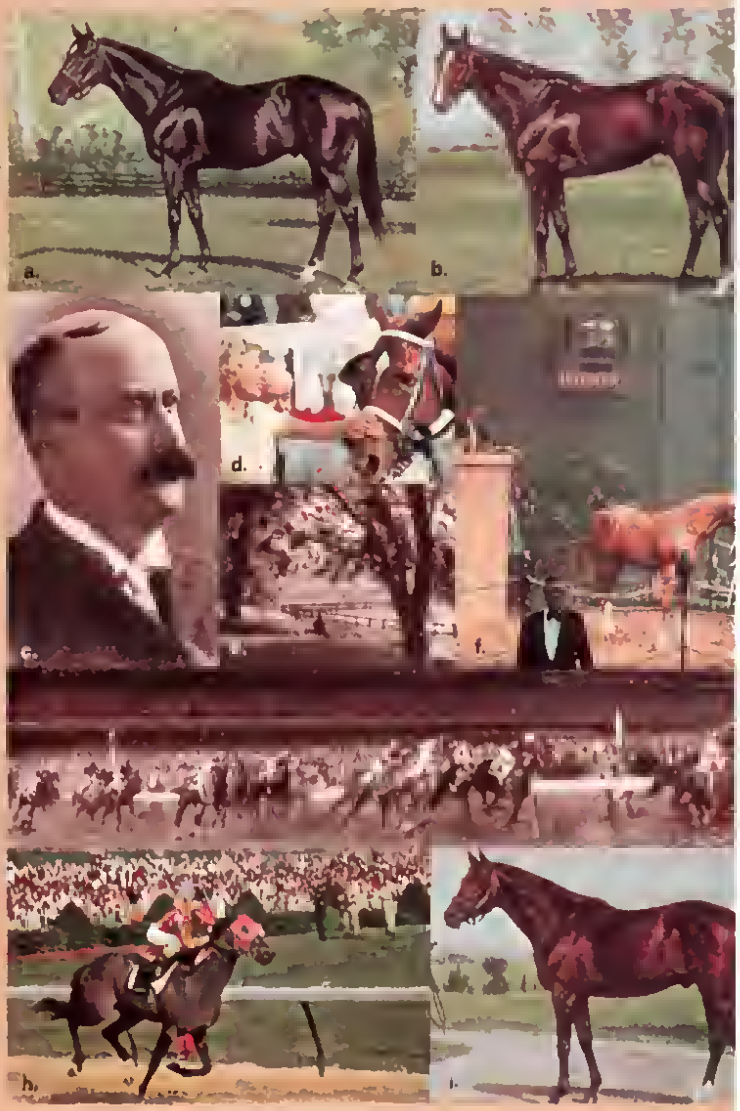
Prices for fillies and mares have gone up, too. Queen Sucree, dam of '74 Derby winner, Cannonade, sold at John M. Olin's dispersal not long ago for a record $1,000,000. At the time, she was again in foal to Bold Bidder, sire of Cannonade And in late June last year, a broodmare was spirited away from Claiborne Stud outside Paris, Kentucky. She was Fanfreluche, in foal to Secretariat, and a top runner in her salad days in Canada a few years back. The half-million-dollar mare was finally found in early December in the hamlet of Tompkinsville some 150 miles from Claiborne, safe in the hands of innocent parties who had given her a home after she had been found wandering down a road some weeks after her disappearance No ransom notes were publicly reported, but a suspect has been arrested

A multi-million-dollar stallion syndication is the ultimate prize in the summer sales yearling game that has been given some interesting twists in recent times by Japanese horsemen, English gambling kings, German financiers, and French noblemen Besides paying record prices for yearlings at Keeneland in July, and at the Fasig-Tipton Co. sales in Saratoga, New York, in August, they have been buying Bluegrass farms, encouraging prices to rise from $1,500 to as high as $6,500 per acre Theirs is a complicated game, one requiring a thorough knowledge of thoroughbred blood lines, racing purse structures, tax laws, and monetary exchange rates.

Syndication of a stallion involves dividing up his ownership into a number of shares, generally 32 or 36 Each shareholder has the right to breed one mare to the stallion a year for the remainder of the animal's stud life This right is called a "season."

Even before Secretariat stepped onto the track for his three-year-old campaign in 1973, Claiborne Stud's young Seth Hancock had syndicated him in behalf of owner Penny Tweedy, now Mrs. Lennart Ringquist, for a then-record $6,080,000, thirty-two investors paying $190,000 a share, the syndication to take effect after the colt's racing days were over

Secretariat's two-year-old career had been spectacular and horsemen sensed his greatness Too, he was a Bold Ruler, and Bold Rulers have made remarkably good



a., b., i. From painting by Richard Stone Reeves c. Keeneland Library e. Photo courtesy of Preston Madden

a. Painting of Bold Ruler, greatest modern sire **b.** Bold Ruler's son, Bold Bidder Sire of Cannonade **c.** Colonel M Lawis Clark, father of the Kentucky Derby **d.** Penny Ringquist with Secretariat **e.** Hamburg Place, birthplace of five Kentucky Derby winners **f.** Bidding reaches $1,500,000 at Keeneland sales for Secretariat Yearling **g.** Rounding the first turn at Churchill Downs **h.** Cannonade wins the 100th Derby I. Bold Ruler's son, Wajima was syndicated for $7,500,000

AOVERTISEMENT

sires. After Secretariat's Triple Crown performance, there was little or no actual financial risk for the initial investors. Any one who chose to, could reasonably expect to get "out"; that is, recoup his initial $190,000 investment by selling early offspring at high prices before it could be determined by racetrack performance whether the little Secretariats could run.

The shareholder who has gotten out the most successfully, of course, is Nelson Bunker Hunt, consignor of the $1,500,000 colt to the 1976 Keeneland summer sale. The colt is out of Charming Alibi, also the dam of Hunt's race mare, Dahlia, winner of more than $1,000,000 in purses here and abroad. Six Canadians bought the colt, named him Canadian Bound, and shipped him to trainer Maurice Zilber in France. Now a three-year-old, Canadian Bound was still winless at last report.



a. Nelson Bunker Hunt, sold world's record yearling **b.** Secretariat's $1,500,000 son, Canadian Bound **c.** Seth Hancock, the master of Claiborne Stud **d.** Secretariat's son Sacrebleu wins his first race at Laurel in Maryland **e.** Secretariat romps in Bold Ruler's old paddock **f.** Darby Dan Farm's Olin Gentry

e, f, Photo by Peter Chew

Some industry leaders contend that $1,500,000 is embarrassingly out of line. The venerable Abram S. Hewitt, squire of Long Branch in Millwood, Virginia, advises Hunt on breeding matters and is presumably not averse to seeing his client make such a strike. Nevertheless, Hewitt says: "I don't think *any* yearling is statistically worth a million and one half dollars, or even half of that price, or indeed, a quarter of that price. It's preposterous."

The winning bid was $785,000 more than a yearling had ever fetched at auction up to that time, and $183,192 more than the mighty Secretariat managed to amass during his two-year racing career. Twenty-six yearlings from his first two crops have sold for an average of $278,808. Whether such prices will hold depends upon their race record in the next year or two.

Kent Hollingsworth, editor of *The Blood-Horse*, is optimistic about Secretariat's future at stud. But he has been saying for years that prices at the summer sales are dangerously inflated. He has likened the thoroughbred industry to the pedigreed-cat game.

"Prices in the cat game are not related to potential earnings, for a cat has no earning power, but are fixed primarily by what operators figure other people can be conned into paying for non-earning progeny. A business with no productive economic base is no business at all. It is a sucker game . . . unreasonably high auction prices are like a fever; they signal illness rather than the health of an industry."

Hollingsworth's highly respected magazine is sponsored by the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association and his voice carries weight. Nor are Hollingsworth and Hewitt alone. Olin Gentry, manager of John Galbreath's Darby Dan Farm—the only nursery to send out winners of both the Kentucky Derby and the Epsom Derby—says that "these prices make no sense, and we have a Secretariat filly ourselves."

Of Super Red's first crop of 28 foals, 10 made it to the races as two-year-olds in 1977. Of these, three managed to get their noses across a finish line first on at least one occasion: Feuille de Rable, a filly, won her maiden race in Canada to start things off; a colt named Dactylographer won the richest two-year-old stakes in England, and Sacrebleu, a roan colt, became the first Secretariat to win in this country when he galloped home by six lengths at Maryland's Laurel Race Course on December 22 in his maiden race.

Because hopes were so high, some industry observers find this record disappointing, including the stallion's syndicate manager, Seth Hancock. With considerable candor, he says that Secretariat's "record looks better than it really is," because of Dactylographer's big win. He doubted that a single member of Secretariat's first crop would be good enough to run in this year's Derby, but he was optimistic about the quality of the second crop.

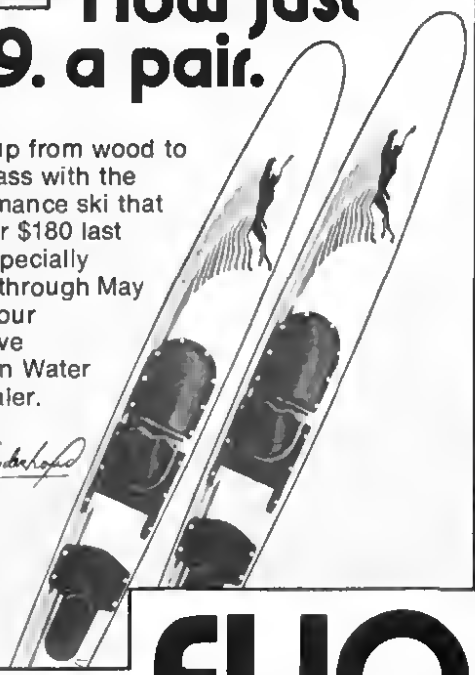
Some blood lines authorities will tell you that if a stallion doesn't produce in his first few crops, he proba-

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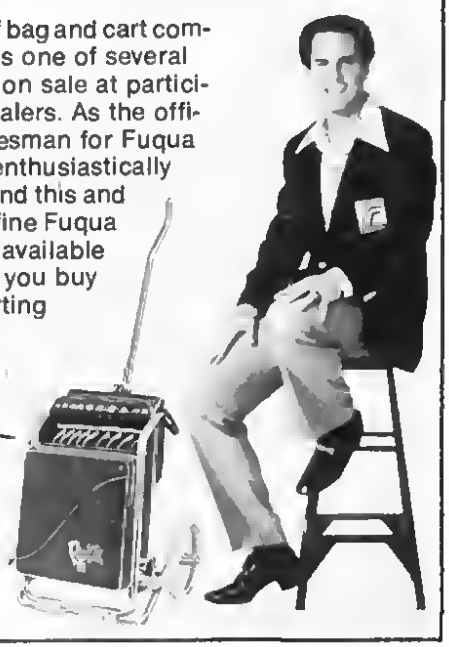
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bly never will; others disagree and point out this horse or that which did not get runners until later In any event, by way of comparison, Darby Dan's Roberto, winner of the 1972 Epsom Derby, had 5 stakes winners in his first crop of two-year-olds last year

J. Soule Smith, an early Kentucky writer, said that the Bluegrass country was "a poem in itself, and its men and women have the distinct outlines of figures in a Shakespearean drama" The history of the region, and of the Derby, is alive with the names of high-rollers: H. Price McGrath, James Ben Ali Haggin, Col. E. R Bradley . . . Among the most successful players in the high-stakes game these days are Zenya Yoshida, the leading breeder in Japan for years, and the Isle of Man's Robert Sangster, operator of the Vernons Football Pools in England.

Yoshida had been quietly buying yearlings at Keeneland for 20 years when, in the early 1970s, he bought a farm outside Lexington and started to make his presence felt in the sales pavilion in a big way

Like most horsemen Yoshida is uncommunicative about the details of his operation. But he is forthright about his intention in this country. He says that before he dies he wants to see his black, yellow, and red silks in the winner's circle at the Kentucky Derby.

There is a saying in the horse business that an "expert" is anyone who has been right once. Yoshida became an expert when he went decisively to $600,000 for Wajima at Keeneland in 1973. Had it not been for bad luck, Yoshida might have realized his Derby ambitions with this colt two years later

Wajima did not get to the races until late in his two-year-old year and Yoshida knew he had something when the colt finished a strong second in the Laurel Futurity. In the colt's first start at three in January 1975 at Hialeah, he wound up out of the money but he obviously needed the race Not long thereafter, however, his trainer Steve DiMauro found a splint developing on the inside of the colt's left foreleg. As so many trainers have done before him, often under pressure from owners, he could have rushed the colt's recovery to get him ready for the Derby. Instead, DiMauro took the animal out of all the Triple Crown races, with Yoshida's approval.

Once Wajima found his running legs again in early June, he rewarded his connections for their faith in him. He won seven races—including five big stakes in a row—and finished second four times, earning nearly $500,000. Twice he whipped the '75 Derby winner, Foolish Pleasure, and handicap champion, Forego Named three-year-old champion, he was syndicated for $7,200,000 by Leslie Combs II's Spendthrift Farm. The owner usually retains a principle financial interest in any syndication of his or her horse.

Record syndications, it seems, are made only to be quickly broken Foolish Pleasure's sire, What a Pleasure, was syndicated in Florida for $8,000,000 in March 1976 Then last August, Canadian Edward P. Taylor announced syndication of The Minstrel, winner of the Epsom and Irish Derbies and $570,605 in purses, for $9,000,000. Principal owner was Robert Sangster who had bought the colt for $200,000 at the 1975 Keeneland summer sales. The great Irish trainer Vincent O'Brien owned part of the animal and conditioned him for his races.

The Minstrel story has had an all-star cast from its inception. Taylor bred the colt and he was North America's leading thoroughbred breeder last year; champion jockey Lester Piggott rode him in his races. The Minstrel's sire is Taylor's Northern Dancer, winner of the '64 Kentucky Derby in a then-record two minutes flat for the one and one quarter miles at Churchill Downs. Northern Dancer has been phenomenally successful at stud. He was North America's leading sire in 1971 and again in 1977; his Nijinsky II won England's Triple Crown in 1970. Sangster led the owners' list in England last year, and won the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe at Longchamp with Alleged, a Kentucky-bred son of Hoist the Flag. European horsemen consider Alleged even better than The Minstrel. Sangster bought the horse as a two-year-old for $175,000.

Last year, the average price of yearlings sold at the



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a. Japan's Zenye Yoshida, gambled and won with Wajima b. Epsom Derby winner, The Minstrel, was a $200,000 yearling c. Little Northern Dancer has proven to be a big sire d. Wajima nosing out the great Forego e. Colonel E. R Bradley was one of the highest of high-rollers

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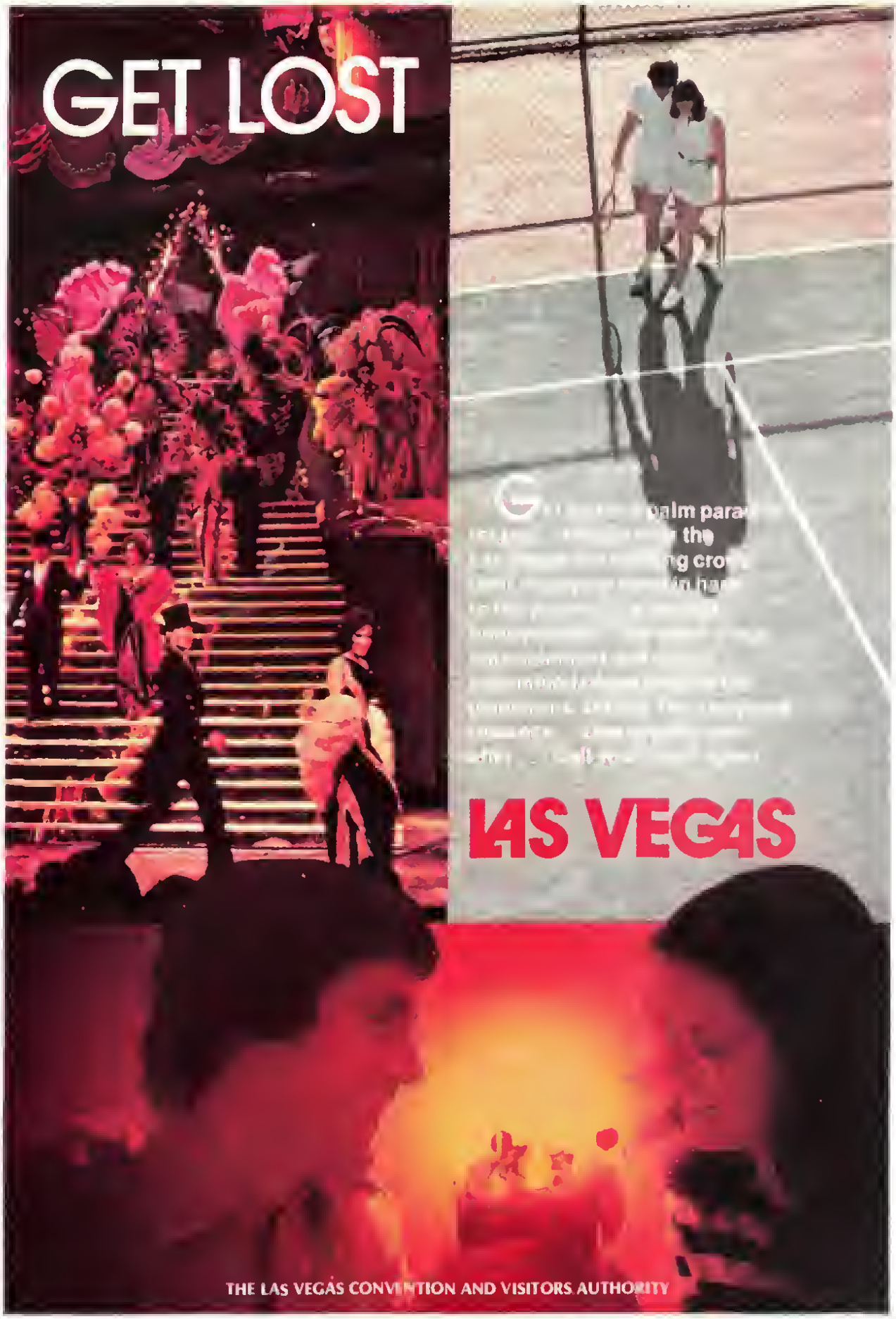
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two summer sales—Saratoga and Keeneland—was $74,767, while all other auction yearlings averaged $9,726, which indicates clearly, as Hollingsworth likes to say, "that there are summer sales yearlings, and there are yearlings, two disparate markets."

In general, buyers at the less-selective sales, which account for 90 percent of the total market, are simply looking for runners, not dreaming of Derby winners and multi-million-dollar stallion syndications. Yet sometimes that's just what they get—at bargain prices.

In 1969, a Venezuelan bloodstock agent named Luis Navas bid in for $1,200 a colt at Keeneland's fall sale That's right, it was Canonero II, the crooked-legged Cinderella colt that dropped out of the sky to win the 1971 Derby for his Caracas owner as part of the mutuel field and then set a track record in the Preakness. Someone has figured out that owner Pedro Baptista realized a 29,000 percent profit on his investment. Since 1971, you haven't been able to buy a stable goat at the Keeneland fall sale for $1,200.

Dust Commander, winner of the 1970 Derby, sold for a mere $6,500 at the Keeneland fall sale in 1968, and there have been other bargains. Then a few years ago, Fasig-Tipton inaugurated a small Kentucky sale and some spectacular buys have resulted. Bold Forbes, the 1976 Derby and Belmont Stakes winner in 1976 was a $15,000 yearling. Seattle Slew, last year's Triple Crown winner, was bought at the sale for $17,500. Early this year, Slew's owner sold a half interest in him for $6,000,000 to a syndicate headed by Leslie Combs' son, Brownell, of Spendthrift Farm, giving the colt a world record book value of $12,000,000. He will stand at stud in 1979.

It goes without saying that there is another side to the yearling market story. One example: In 1975, a colt by Raise a Native out of Gay Hostess—the same pairing that produced '69 Derby and Preakness winner Majestic Prince—was sold for $715,000 at Keeneland Named Elegant Prince, he developed what they call in Kentucky, "a case of the slows" When a fashionably bred animal like this fails to make it on the track, it is as though he had died. After training unsuccessfully in California, the costly Prince was smuggled back to Kentucky in the dead of the night, so to speak.

Ties of equine blood between the Derby Stakes at Epsom Downs and its Kentucky namesake have always been close. Colonel Clark crossed the Atlantic in 1872 to study English racing in general and the Derby in particular. First run on May 4, 1780, the Epsom Derby was firmly established as England's most important three-year-old classic by the time of Clark's visit. Clark was thrilled with what he had seen, and returned to Louisville convinced that a similar race would serve as an ideal showcase for Kentucky-breds. He also believed that the race would eventually attract the best horses from other states He was proven correct on both counts.

Seventy-nine of the 103 runnings of the Derby have been won by Kentucky-breds, including Aristides, the first winner, and Seattle Slew, the latest winner Furthermore, the Derby not only draws the nation's best horses, it serves as the focus of the U.S. racing calendar

Diomed, who was by Florizel, a son of Herod, won the first Epsom Derby and then, at the advanced age of 21, was imported to this country after he had been adjudged a failure at stud on his native heath. He was to have an immensely powerful impact upon the American thoroughbred. His descendant Lexington—1850-1875—is considered by most authorities to be the greatest sire of his or any other day. Starting in 1861, he led this country's sire list for 14 years and then for another two years posthumously—a record that no other stallion has approached

"Lexington produced great horses like a shower of sparks," observes Abram Hewitt. The horse fathered 238 winners, of which 84 would be considered stakes horses today, 11 of them champions: Kentucky, Asteroid, Norfolk, Idlewild, General Duke, Vauxhall, Harry Bassett, Tom Bowling, Acrobat, Sultana, and Duke of Magenta.

Lexington died at Woodburn Stud outside Lexington



f. Keeneland Library g. Photo by Peter Chew a. National Museum of Racing, Inc

a. 15 direct descendants of Lexington won the Kentucky Derby
b. Aristides, ' the little red horse ' won the first Kentucky Derby, 1875
c. 1970 Derby winner. Dust Commander was a yearling bargain
d. Triple Crown winner Seattle Slew shown in the Churchill Downs winner's circle lest yeer e. Canonero II, e $1,200 Keenaland Yearling, wes upset winner of the 1971 Derby f. Diomed, winner of the Epsom Derby. 1720 g. Elegant Prince

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less than two months after the running of the first Kentucky Derby on May 17, 1875 won by his grandson Aristides Fifteen more of his direct descendants would win Derbies

Lexington's line has died out, but in Bold Ruler, Seattle Slew's grandsire who died of cancer in 1971 after heading the U.S. sire list a total of eight times, we had perhaps the greatest stallion since Lexington.

The late Col Phil T. Chinn, a celebrated Kentucky breeder, said more than 50 years ago: "After one of them has won the Derby, any breeding expert can sit down and show you just why he won—from his pedigree The only trouble is, the expert can't do it *before* the race"

Hence it is easy for even an amateur student of bloodlines to tell you why Dust Commander won the Derby in 1970, Secretariat in 1973, Cannonade in 1974, Foolish Pleasure in 1975, Bold Forbes in 1976, and Seattle Slew in 1977. All of these horses were sired by sons of Bold Ruler except for Secretariat who *was* a son of Bold Ruler.



a. Hoist the Flag, now a top sire at Claiborne Stud b. Neshuo, one of Nasrullah's greatest sons, lost 1955 Derby to Swaps c. Secretariat's stable mate, Riva Ridge d. The Late A. B. "Bull" Hancock, Jr., imported the mighty Nasrullah e. Nasrullah, sire of Bold Ruler and nearly 100 other stakes winners f. A runnerup in 1957 Derby, Round Table is still a leading sire g. Bold Ruler (No. 1, Eddie Arcaro up), top ranked 2-year-old, 1956

Bold Ruler, in turn, was by Nasrullah whom many experts believe was the most important import since Diomed. The late A. B. "Bull" Hancock, Jr., father of Seth Hancock, brought the horse to Claiborne from England in 1950 Apart from Bold Ruler, Nasrullah produced the great Nashua, and 97 other stakes winners, and led the U.S. sire list five times in the late 1950s and early 1960s

On a cold, drizzly morning this winter, I revisited the cemetery at Claiborne where Nasrullah and Bold Ruler lie beneath small headstones. Then with old friend Mary Jane Gallaher, the Lexington writer, and a stud groom, I walked a few hundred yards up a rutted path between paddocks and suddenly, there he was: Secretariat, grazing in Bold Ruler's old paddock. Running a little to girth now that his racing days are long behind him, he grazed on without looking up, as we were told he would. Further along in another paddock, Secretariat's old stablemate, Riva Ridge came trotting up to have his muzzle rubbed, friendly as always. Mary Jane and I had last seen these two great horses battling down the Belmont stretch in the 1973 Marlboro Cup

Round Table was found in another paddock, and Hoist the Flag in another. Colonel Clark would be dumbfounded at what he wrought—great commercial breeding farms such as Claiborne, Spendthrift, Gainesway, each with a score or more of stylishly bred stallions; and the private farms—Darby Dan, Calumet, Elmendorf

A visitor to the Bluegrass is plied with statistics. There are, he is told, 425 stallions in Kentucky and 7,000 broodmares on average, and while they produce about 15 percent of the nation's foals annually, these animals grow up to win more than half of the stakes races over $50,000—and so forth. But the Bluegrass country and the Kentucky Derby are not made up of statistics. Chance and romance are forever intruding.

There is, for example, a small nursery outside Harrodsburg called Comin-up Farm owned by Miss Priscilla "Percy" Toth, a former airlines counter girl in Washington, D.C. who saved her money for years to buy it She has made a specialty of taking broodmares with mental or physical problems, working with them, and getting them in foal. Now she has nine broodmares of her own. On July 19, 1976 at the Keeneland sales she sold a yearling from one of these mares, by the stallion Advocator, for $60,000 Like Yoshida, she wants to win the Derby one day, but with a difference. "I want to win it with a filly"

In a few days time, the 104th Derby will be history and another chapter written in a fascinating story that grew out of the vision of one Kentucky colonel so long ago

BY PETER CHEW

ADVERTISEMENT

Red as in dead? Not again

In '77 the Dodgers had the National League West wrapped up by mid-May But by winning two of three last week in L.A., the Reds showed they plan no '78 el foldo

With a mere five months remaining in the baseball season, Los Angeles still has not clinched the National League West Division championship. In light of what happened last spring, when the Dodgers came out smoking to win 22 of their first 26 games and virtually sew up the title by Memorial Day—no, make that Mother's Day—this was refreshing news to the opposition.

The 1978 season should be different—vastly different—if last week's results are any indication. Still smarting from their second-place showing of a year ago, the Reds whirled into Los Angeles in a fury and hammered the Dodgers in the teams' first two meetings of the season. Then, apparently still reeling from the 19–5 pasting they had taken in Games 1 and 2, the defending champions nearly gave away a victory they seemed to have firmly in hand. Clearly the Big Red Machine was back in gear, which means that the Big Blue Wrecking Crew was back in second place.

After their skirmish in L.A., the Dodgers and Reds split to meet the challenges of the Astros and Giants, respectively, the teams considered most likely to thrust themselves into a divisional race that has long been the province of Los Angeles and Cincy. But after the Dodgers had dumped the Astros in three of four games and the Reds had beaten the Giants in two of three, it was beginning to look as if the Reds or the Dodgers would reign again come September.

The division would seem to be out of whack if any other teams were on top. In its nine-year history, Cincinnati and Los Angeles have accounted for 14 first- or second-place finishes. They have ended up 1–2 or 2–1 in each of the last five seasons. The Reds won titles in 1970, '72, '73, '75 and '76, the Dodgers in '74 and '77.

When Los Angeles won last year it was a notable upset; the Reds, twice world champions, were being compared, by themselves and others, with the greatest teams of all time. The Dodgers ended that talk in a hurry, building a 13-game lead by May 27. Thereafter Cincinnati never got closer than 6½ games, and it wound up losing by 10. "I tried everything I knew, including psychological warfare, but nothing worked," Manager Sparky Anderson says. "All I did was make a fool out of myself."

Though they were blown out of the race, the Reds were never convinced that the Dodgers were the better team. They beat Los Angeles 10 of 18 times and finished the year with a higher team batting average, a higher fielding average, more runs scored and more stolen bases. The only important department in which the Dodgers were significantly better, except for the won-lost record, of course, was pitching; L.A. led the league with a 3.22 ERA, while Cincinnati was 10th at 4.22.

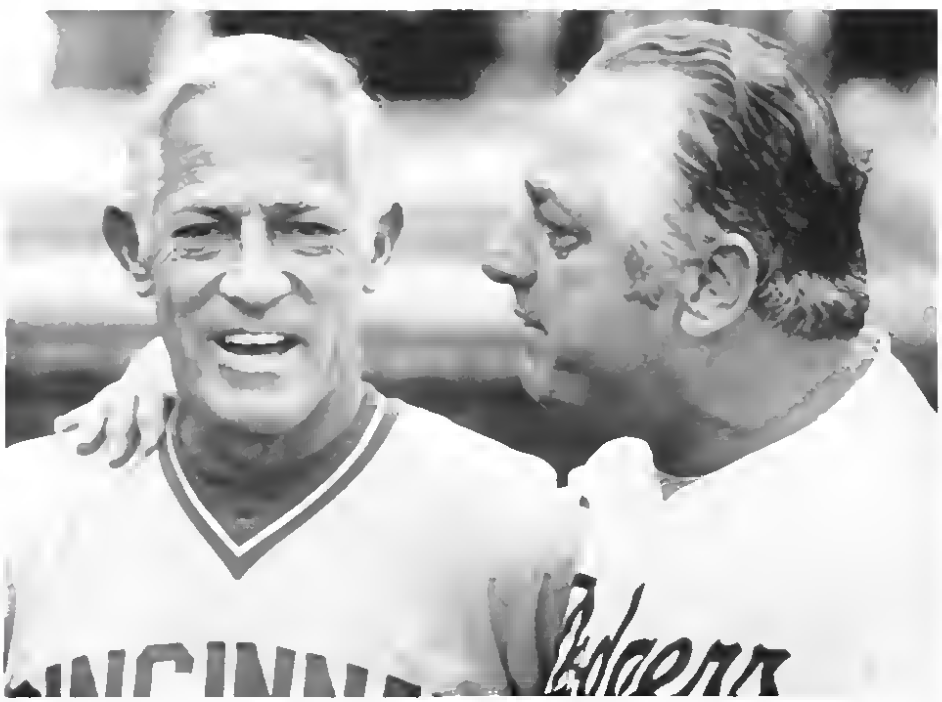
"With any pitching at all we would have been in front by 10 at the All-Star break," Anderson claims. "If we finish in the top three in ERA this year, in the 3.30-3.40 range, we are a mortal lock to win the division. And I think we can, because this is the best staff we've had in my nine years as manager."

Certainly Tom Seaver is the best pitcher Anderson has ever had, although his record in '78 does not show it. Seaver was 14–3 with the Reds last season—21–6 for the year, including his two months with the Mets—but after four starts this year he was 0–1 with a 3.91 ERA. Anderson remains undismayed. "Tom will win 20," he says, "and I'll match any bet you want to make."

In fact, though Seaver's inability to win early has probably precluded the 30-victory season that rabid Cincinnatians had been predicting for him, his weak April could be viewed as a source of optimism for the Reds. If Cincy is a first-place team without a winning Seaver, what will it be when he cuts loose, as he presumably will? The obvious answer to that can only be disheartening for the Dodgers.

Offsetting Seaver's dawdling start has been the performance of Bill Bonham, a 29-year-old righthander who was a consistent loser (53–70) during his seven previous big league seasons with the Cubs. By beating the Dodgers, Bonham last week ran his record to 3–0, with a 3.24

continued



Is that a pat on—or a stab in—the back Tom Lasorda is giving fellow sniper Sparky Anderson?

ERA and 21 strikeouts in 25 innings. Only a sore elbow that developed late last week seems capable of preventing him from having his best season. Cozy Wrigley Field has never been noted for building pitchers' confidence. For that reason Anderson sees a similarity between Bonham and the Dodgers' Burt Hooton, another Cub loser, who became a big winner in Los Angeles.

Even before the addition of Seaver and Bonham, Anderson figured the Reds owned the division almost by divine right. "The '70s have belonged to us," he says. "Even when we lost in '74 we came back and won two years in a row. I'm not sure the Dodgers really think they won it last year, based on what happened against the Yankees in the World Series. If you lose the World Series, you've done nothing. Nobody cares who finishes second. So, actually, they've accomplished zero."

Understandably, the Dodgers are not enchanted by such talk. Ron Cey says, "Both of us are good enough to win. I accept that, but they don't. They think they own baseball." Dodger Manager Tom Lasorda says, "If Anderson has the great team he claims he has, then he should win. If we beat them, that'll just prove Sparky did a lousy job."

Lasorda and Anderson, who often refer to each other in ungentlemanly terms, have been doing a lot of sniping. The first blow in their verbal battle was struck before the start of last season at a dinner honoring Lasorda and his predecessor, Walter Alston. "This is the year Los Angeles finds out how good a manager Walter Alston was," Anderson said. He contends he did not intend this as implied criticism of Lasorda, but the Dodger manager has stewed about it ever since. Now one of them is always attempting to upset the other. Last season Lasorda kept a file of Anderson's comments as they appeared in the press, to be used at strategic moments; during the winter Anderson took notes on Lasorda's remarks whenever they were telecast.

But heated oratory is not what made last week's series important. The three games were supposed to give an early indication of just how much the Reds have improved and how good the Dodgers' chances of repeating are. As usual they were one-two in the standings, with Los Angeles on top as the confrontation began, and even the players were making the uncommon admission that this was no ordinary early-season series. "The Dodgers have always been a quick-starting team," said Pete Rose. "I'd like to get ahead of them for a change and let them try to catch us."

The Dodgers obviously thought the games were significant, too. Instead of using one man to scout the Reds, they sent two. And Lasorda altered his pitching rotation to give Tommy John, who has beaten the Reds nine of the 11 times he has gotten decisions against them, a start in the third game.

Unfortunately for L.A., John could not also work the first two. The Reds pounded out 15 hits and won the first game 8–2, and 16 hits—including home runs by Joe Morgan, Johnny Bench, George Foster and Ken Griffey—to win the second 11–3. This was more than enough firepower to keep Bonham and Fred Norman (2–0) unbeaten. "I hope they enjoyed wearing their World Series rings, because last year is gone," said Morgan.

Lasorda did his best to calm his players and fans by saying, "We're 6–4 now and that's .600 ball. We can't let anybody get panicky after 10 games." But he realized something special had to be done. So before the Wednesday game he put in a call to Palm Springs and talked to the next best thing to the Great Dodger in the Sky, Frank Sinatra. "We always win when you call, but I couldn't wait any longer," Lasorda told Sinatra. "I had to call you."

Lasorda's best call was the one that put John, whose sinker gives Cincy's free swingers fits, into the rotation. Except for the Reds' two-run, four-hit outburst in the fourth inning, John stayed in control throughout the game. Entering the ninth, he had a 5–2 lead, the Dodger runs having come on a first-inning bases-empty homer by Reggie Smith and two shots by Rick Monday, who had five home runs during the week to raise his total to a major league-leading eight.

John struck out Foster to open the ninth, but then walked Bench, who was subsequently forced at second by Dan Driessen. The third out was far more elusive. First, Davey Lopes let Rick Auerbach's grounder go through his legs at second base. Then Bill Russell could not handle a hit to short by Dave Concepcion. Finally, Cey fielded a grounder by Dave Collins at third and threw wildly to first. When the Reds stopped running, the score was 5–4, with runners at second and third and Rose at the plate.

In the Cincinnati dugout, Anderson was thinking, "With Pete up, we have it won." Across the field, Lasorda was coming out of the other dugout to tell John, "Forget what's happened. There isn't a pitcher I'd rather have right now."

John threw one more pitch, a sinker below the knees, and Rose hit a grounder that, at last, the Dodger infield converted into the final out. "I was too anxious," Rose said later. "I swung like a 16-year-old."

The Dodgers were glad he had. They know full well what an early-season hot streak can do for a team's title prospects, and a sweep by the Reds might have been too hot for L.A. to handle.

THE WEEK

(April 16-22)

by HERMAN WEISKOPF

AL WEST When the season began, American League batters were itching to get at Oakland's five-man starting rotation, which had a combined 10–24 record in the majors last year. But those five—Rick Langford (8–19 in 1977), Matt Keough (1–3), Pete Broberg (1–2 with the Cubs) and a pair of rookies from the Giant organization, Johnny Johnson and Alan Wirth—are 5–2 so far. Together with a superlative bullpen, they have teamed up for a 1.44 staff ERA and have left those itchy batters scratching their heads. Broberg beat Minnesota 7–2, Keough disposed of Seattle 5–3 and Wirth was a 3–0 victor over the Mariners. They all got airtight relief from former Giant Elias Sosa. Another ex-San Franciscan, Gary Alexander, slugged his third and fourth homers for the A's (4–1). And Tony Armas drove in the decisive run in the 11th to knock off Minnesota 6–5.

Staying percentage points in front of the A's were the Royals (4–1). Dennis Leonard held off Cleveland 2–1, Paul Splittorff defeated Toronto 5–0 and Baltimore 5–3, and Reliever Al Hrabosky saved two games. Splittorff's wins were his 10th and 11th in a row since early last season.

Near-perfect relief work by Dave LaRoche and Paul Hartzell highlighted California's 5–1 week. LaRoche gave up just one hit in 5⅓ innings, saved one game and won another, while Hartzell yielded two hits in 6⅔ innings and had three saves. Frank Tanana, relying on an off-speed curve and changeup because he is still not fully recovered from last season's sore arm, ran his record to 4–0 with two wins. Don Baylor hit his third, fourth and fifth home runs, Ron Jackson batted .500 and Lyman Bostock finally contributed to the offense.

The $450,000-a-year outfielder explained

continued



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his early-season slump by saying that when he was at the plate he had been "hallucinating" and that he felt himself "standing outside my body." He added, "If I don't do well the rest of April, I'm not going to take any pay for the month." That said (the offer was declined by owner Gene Autry), Bostock broke out of his .051 doldrums with three hits in an 11–2 rout of the Mariners.

Five hits and five RBIs by Bob Stinson helped Seattle (3–4) break an eight-game losing streak by sweeping a doubleheader from Minnesota 8–5 and 7–2. Tom House put in a gritty performance to earn the second victory, a 13-hitter in which he went all the way despite suffering a dislocated finger when struck by a batted ball in the first inning.

Home runs by Bill Nahorodny, Chet Lemon and Eric Soderholm enabled Chicago (1–3) to rout Toronto 11–2.

Minnesota, which stranded 59 runners, and Texas were winless. Dave Goltz, who had 20 victories for the Twins last year, lost for the third time and maintained his record of never having won in April during five-plus big league seasons. The April blues also infected Ranger fastballer Len Barker, who uncorked a truly wild pitch with the bases loaded in Boston. The heave landed halfway up the screen behind home plate.

KC 9–2 OAK 10–3 CAL 10–4 CHI 5–6
MINN 6–11 SEA 5–13 TEX 2–8

AL EAST

Tight relief work and a succession of rallies boosted Detroit (3–0) into the East lead. Jim Crawford's 3⅓ innings of hitless relieving helped the Tigers beat Toronto 4–3, and John Hiller came out of the bullpen to earn a 7–6 victory over Texas. He yielded only one hit in 4⅓ innings. Detroit had trailed the Rangers 3–0, but won when Tim Corcoran singled home Steve Dillard in the 10th. Chicago had Detroit down 6–0, only to lose 10–9 when Lou Whitaker capped a four-run last of the ninth with a run-scoring single. There was only one downbeat note for the Tigers: Mark Fidrych, missing a start, needed a cortisone shot in his aching shoulder.

Like Detroit and Boston (*page 24*), Milwaukee (2–5) hit far and often. But even though they had 10 home runs, the Brewers tumbled to third place as their pitchers gave up seven homers and 41 runs. Gorman Thomas, Ceeil Cooper and Larry Hisle tied Baylor for the league lead in four-baggers with five apiece. And Dick Davis was the majors' hottest rookie hitter at .429.

A two-hitter by Rick Waits gave Cleveland (2–2) a 6–0 victory over Texas. The Indians' other win was a 13–4 drubbing of the Red Sox, in which Andre Thornton hit for the cycle.

Don Stanhouse saved two games for Baltimore (3–3): a 7–5 decision over Milwaukee and a 2–1 win for Jim Palmer over Kansas City. Lee May hit three homers and had eight RBIs for the week and scored the go-ahead run in that 2–1 victory over the Royals when Dennis Leonard threw two wild pitches.

By turning a bunt into a triple play, Jim Clancy of the Blue Jays (2–4) helped lock up his first triumph, a 4–2 win over Chicago.

"There's a projection of emotion and sensitivity by the crowd in that situation," said Reggie Jackson of New York (3–3) after his bottom-of-the-ninth homer beat Baltimore 4–3. In such instances, Jackson said, "I swell up with confidence and relaxness." Roy White was less voluble after his single in the 12th polished off the Brewers 4–3. Reliever Rich Gossage was talking to himself after his errors on two consecutive bunts gave Toronto a 4–3 win, and Gossage an 0–3 record.

DET 8–2 BOS 9–4 MIL 7–7 NY 6–7
CLEV 4–6 BALT 5–8 TOR 4–9

NL EAST

Reliever Skip Lockwood of New York (4–2) said the Mets "might end up serendipitous. It's like falling in a mud puddle and finding a fish in your pocket." The Mets fell twice, they did not hit a homer, and Steve Henderson went 0 for 21, but when they got up they were in first place. There was nothing fishy about their rise. Lockwood saved two games, Pat Zachry mowed down St. Louis 2–0 on two hits and Bobby Valentine and Ron Hodges had game-winning hits.

Serendipity was not the lot of Ross Grimsley of Montreal (4–1), who endured numerous annoyances before facing Philadelphia. "Today I had a lot on my mind," Grimsley said. "I've been moving. My wife just got into town. Somebody broke into my van and stole my TV, and my insurance was canceled when I came to Canada." Because he drives a van, Grimsley cannot park indoors where the other Expos do at Olympic Stadium. So he paid to pull into a lot outside the stadium. Then he had to wander around the walls of the park because "there are 40,000 doors that lead nowhere." Putting those hassles aside, Grimsley beat the Phillies 5–3 to conclude a doubleheader sweep. Earlier, Grimsley had beaten New York 4–1 on a four-hitter.

Third-place Chicago (3–2) defeated New York 5–0 on the four-hit pitching of Dennis Lamp and a three-run homer by former Met Dave Kingman. Five hits were all the Pirates got off Rick Reuschel as he won 5–1.

After being weathered out several times, Philadelphia (1–2) was rusty, committing six errors and stranding 28 runners. The victory came when Pitcher Jim Lonborg drove in two runs and trimmed the Pirates 6–2. Pittsburgh (also 1–2), which was hitting .196 after 10 games, pounded out 14 hits in its 11th outing, an 8–7 win over the Cardinals. Duffy Dyer, batting for the first time this season, settled that game with a two-out, two-run double in the bottom of the ninth.

It was not until their final game of the week and 13th of the season that the Cardinals (0–4) got a homer from an outfielder. But even Jerry Morales' blast could not prevent another loss.

NY 9–6 MONT 7–5 CHI 7–6
PHIL 5–5 ST.L 5–8 PITT 4–7

NL WEST

While the Reds and Dodgers hammered home runs and struggled for first place, the Braves (2–5) just plain struggled, never hitting a ball over the fence. Atlanta, whose longest hits were six doubles, scored only seven runs, was shut out three times, batted .197 and hit into 10 double plays. Only a pair of remarkable pitching performances kept the Braves from a nonwinning week. Preston Hanna and Adrian Devine beat the Giants 1–0 on one hit. The next day Atlanta exploded for two runs as Dick Ruthven shut out San Francisco on two singles.

San Diego (3–3) swept three games from the Braves, with Rollie Fingers preserving 2–0 victories for Randy Jones and Bob Owchinko. Between those whitewashings, Gaylord Perry zapped Atlanta 9–3. Playing in the National League for the first time since 1971, Perry is taking his first swings in six years. And mighty cuts they were against the Braves: Perry had a single, two doubles and two RBIs. In that game he raised his strikeout total to 2,860 and moved into third place on the all-time list behind Bob Gibson and Walter Johnson.

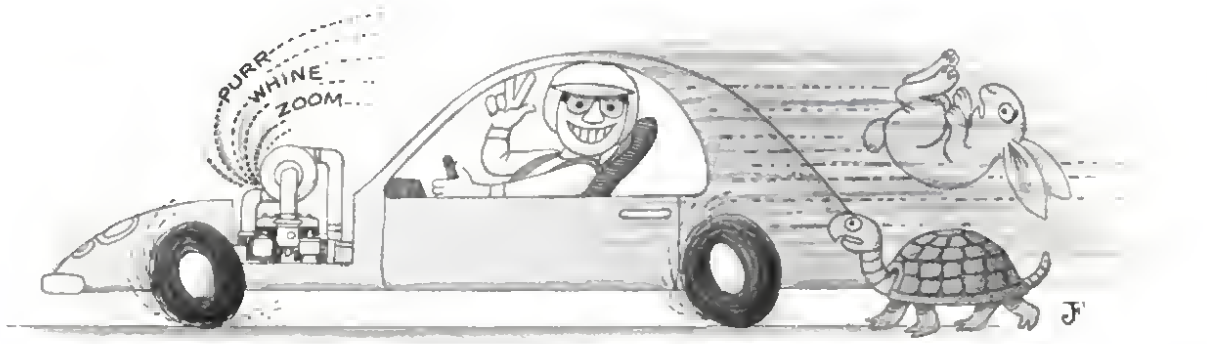
Another venerable player, Willie McCovey of San Francisco (3–3), walloped a three-run homer in an 8–4 win over San Diego and hit his first triple—a two-run drive—since 1974 to help Vida Blue defeat Atlanta 5–1. Before his starting assignments, Bob Knepper tries to calm himself by reading. After perusing *Basic Auto Mechanics*, Knepper threw a wrench into the Big Red Machine's scoring. He beat Cincy 3–0, allowing three singles and getting 10 strikeouts.

Houston (4–2) executed its second triple play of the season, snuffing out a Los Angeles threat in the ninth to wrap up an 8–6 victory. Bob Watson started the tri-killing by fielding a liner hit by Ron Cey with men on first and second. Joe Niekro drove in two runs and tossed a four-hitter to beat San Diego 5–1, and Enos Cabell finished off the Reds 4–3 with a game-winning single in the 13th.

CIN 10–5 LA 9–5 SF 7–6
HOUS 7–6 SD 5–7 ATL 3–10

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

ELIAS SOSA: The 27-year-old right-handed relief pitcher from the Dominican Republic appeared in all five of Oakland's games, allowing two hits in 6⅔ innings, saving two wins over Seattle and beating Minnesota 6–5.



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And what comes out is more zip when you want it, thus more potential sporting pleasure in this day of shrinking engines and dwindling power. Turbos are old hat at Indy: now come the street cars

The dollar value of the word "turbo" has gone from zero to $17,200 in exactly 23 years. Back in 1955 Chevrolet introduced an eight-cylinder engine under the name Turbo-Fire V-8. The turbo prefix was a no-charge item, and the customers got what they paid for: nothing. Back then, the prefix was about as useful and descriptive as the letter *h* in oh.

But times are different now. We have a 55-mph speed limit and federal fuel-consumption laws and cars that are being designed as much for efficiency as glamour. Now, at the insistence of the engineers who design the cars rather than the people who name them, the word turbo is making a comeback that may just save the day for automobile enthusiasts. This time turbo refers to the real thing—a compact, turbine-driven supercharger—and as was not the case in 1955, you now must pay dearly in some cases for the prefix. Attaching it to a Porsche, as in Turbo Porsche, puts the price at $36,700, up a nice, round $17,200 over the less exotic 911 SC model. Part of that surcharge, however, goes for different brakes, wider wheels, special tires and modified bodywork necessitated by the dramatic increase in performance available with the Porsche turbo. Affixing a turbo to a Saab is more reasonable, a mere $9,998 instead of $8,098 for the non-turbo equivalent. If your taste runs to Detroit, Buick will serve up a Turbo V-6 Regal Sport Coupe as cheaply as $5,852.90.

These are the turbos you can buy today. More are on the way. Within months, Ford Motor Company will introduce a turbocharged four-cylinder engine for its 1979 Mustang and Capri. Chrysler Corporation has prototypes for four-, six- and eight-cylinder engines. And if the auto industry isn't moving fast enough for you, almost every decent-sized city in the U.S. has at least one shop that will custom-install a turbocharger on any car that rolls in the door.

The appeal of a turbo is that in effect it makes a big engine out of a small one. With proper design, the addition of a turbo provides a whopping power increase. The Turbo Porsche is a prime example. It has a six-cylinder engine of less displacement than any American V-8, yet it is the fastest production-line car currently being sold in this country. With no sterner urging than a firm foot on the gas pedal, it will accelerate from zero to 60 mph in 4.9 seconds and continue its double-time march right up to 165 mph. As thrill rides go, there are none finer, and for many enthusiasts that alone justifies the sticker price. But an even more remarkable aspect of the Turbo Porsche is the way it combines a thoroughbred's capacity for speed with the docile manners of a draft horse. You can idle it through clotted metropolitan traffic in top gear with the air conditioner on full blast and it will never hiccup. But point it toward the horizon and it will haul you there at three times the national speed limit. Considering the nature of today's federal laws concerning emissions and fuel economy, that sort of performance would be almost impossible to achieve without some form of supercharging, a catchall word for all devices that pressurize the air/fuel mixture being fed into an engine.

Turbochargers are the superchargers of choice these days because of their utter simplicity. An automotive turbo is about the size of a football and contains only one moving part, a shaft with a finned turbine wheel attached to each end. A streamlined housing surrounds each of the two turbines. All of the engine's exhaust gas is routed through one housing; all of the intake mixture of gasoline and air passes through the other. The flow of exhaust causes the turbine to spin for exactly the same reason that a pinwheel spins in a breeze. And this rotates the shaft, which, in turn, spins the intake turbine. Because of its design, the intake turbine acts as a high-efficiency fan that actually compresses the intake charge, allowing more of it to be ingested into the engine. More intake charge going in means more power coming out.

At first thought, the idea of using the energy of the exhaust to cram more

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charge down the intake has a kind of perpetual-motion-machine ring to it. But the engineer's equations say that it works. And so does practical experience. Turbochargers have become standard equipment on Indy cars. The legendary four-cylinder Offenhauser engine used at the Brickyard today displaces 161.703 cubic inches and would be very hard pressed indeed to make 400 horsepower on its own. But with a turbocharger adjusted for typical race conditions, the output rises to 750 horsepower. Indy drivers would be the first to know, and the first to blow the whistle, if pinwheel power was the hoax it superficially appears to be.

The extent of the power increase available through turbocharging depends almost entirely upon how much the intake charge is boosted above atmospheric pressure. Boost is commonly referred to in inches—actually, inches of mercury, which is the same scale used by a TV weatherman when he says the barometric pressure is 29.92 and rising. Racers are not at all timid about the use of boost. In fact, Indy cars have more pressure in their intake manifolds than in their tires. For qualifying, the rules specify a limit of 80 inches, equivalent to about 40 pounds per square inch. But for the race, each team is left to its own discretion. Dan Gurney, the former Indy driver who now returns each year as a car owner, remembers 140 inches being used in one Offy. That is enough to turn out 1,100 horsepower. Of course, that much boost has been known to burst an engine like an overinflated party balloon. And even if the engine survives, there is the effect of the extra speed on the driver, who, according to Gurney, "can hold his breath only so long."

Actually, Indy drivers are relative newcomers to the thrill of turbochargers. The device was originally intended for airplanes, and that is probably its best application even today. Airplanes face a peculiar problem. The rarefied atmosphere found at high altitudes offers less air resistance, allowing aircraft to fly faster with no increase in power. But this same thin air also contains less oxygen, suffocating engines and severely decreasing power. In practice, a piston-engine airplane runs out of power before it reaches a high enough altitude to take advantage of the reduced air resistance. But with a turbocharger to compress the intake charge, sea-level horsepower is available at altitudes where man can no longer breathe without supplementary oxygen. The attendant speed improvement is well worth the complexity of an oxygen mask or pressurized cabin.

Still, somebody had to go up the first time and prove it. One of the earliest high-altitude pioneers was Captain Rudolph W. (Shorty) Schroeder of the U.S. Air Service, who set a world record of 28,900 feet in 1918. During the course of his testing of the then-new General Electric turbocharger, he set three more altitude records in 1919. All of this was accomplished in an open-cockpit plane. Schroeder was completely covered in sheepskin as protection against the cold. At these unprecedented altitudes, the hazards were unknown.

Finally, on Feb. 27, 1920, Schroeder reached 33,114 feet, yet another record. When he removed his goggles to change oxygen bottles, the −63° Fahrenheit air instantly froze his eyeballs. In the confusion that followed, the lack of oxygen caused Schroeder to pass out, and his plane dropped nearly six miles before he revived and regained control. Although he was almost blind, Schroeder found his original airport, McCook Field in Dayton, and landed safely.

For his heroism, Schroeder was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The General Electric turbocharger he was testing, after further refinement, went on to boost the B-17, B-24, B-29, P-38 and P-47 to strategically high altitudes during World War II.

While turbochargers produce their greatest benefits up in the air, their finest earthbound application is surely the diesel engine. Heavy trucks, farm tractors and earth movers have been using turbos for years to produce more power with less smoke. Diesel power plants are notoriously heavy for the energy they generate, and this has always been a strike against them for passenger-car use. But a small diesel boosted by a lightweight turbocharger compares favorably with a gasoline engine. Mercedes-Benz will be the first automaker to market a turbo diesel passenger car, and it will most certainly not be the last.

Curiously, the turbocharged gasoline-burning passenger car is getting all the play these days, but it is probably the least favorable application for a turbo. There are two problems. One is that gasoline engines are inclined toward detonation—that knocking sound you hear when you open the throttle at low speed in high gear and usually blame on lousy gasoline. Turbochargers can aggravate this condition to the point of pulverized pistons and rings. The other drawback is that turbos are also notably inflexible. They work great on airplanes, trucks and boats that run for long periods at the same throttle opening, but passenger cars are forever speeding up to pass, slowing to turn and moving through traffic in spurts. Most turbocharged engines display a certain reticence in this kind of driving. They are conspicuously weak at low speeds, floor the accelerator and you think the engine is asleep. And even in the more efficient speed ranges there tends to be a momentary lag before you feel additional power coming on.

It was just these difficulties that caused Detroit to give up on turbos the last time around. In the early '60s General Motors built turbocharged Corvairs, Oldsmobiles and Buicks. Those cars were wonderfully exotic, but for the simple manufacture of extra horsepower bigger engines were always a cheaper way.

But bigger engines are also gas guzzlers, and that puts them in very bad odor these days. Adding a turbo to a small engine does not increase its thirst in routine traffic. And when you floor the accelerator and the boost comes up, not however to anything approaching the levels in an Indy car—the Turbo Porsche's maximum boost is 15 inches—you suddenly have the power of a much larger engine. That is why turbos are all the fashion. Nothing else can match their blend of economy and performance.

Nothing else can match their potential for fun motoring, either. When the turbocharger kicks in on a Turbo Porsche, it feels like a door being slammed on your seat. The Turbo Saab is less violent, substituting instead a most endearing mechanical charm. You can hear the turbo. It sounds like a miniature jet engine whistling up to speed whenever you dip into the boost. The Saab will also tell you all about turbo lag, the same delay that frustrates A. J. Foyt when he tries to hurry out of the pits at Indy. On the other hand, the Saab will also let you practice overcoming this lag without spending the entire month of May in Indianapolis. And, according to some of the world's best drivers, that alone would make its turbo prefix worth whatever it costs. **END**

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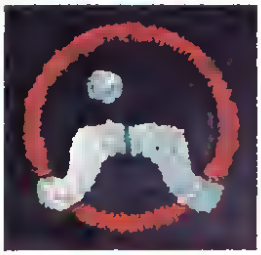




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He has an odd name even for a racehorse—Esops Foibles. His trainer, Loren Rettele, is 32 but looks 16. His breeder is known in racing as the wrong Whitney, which is to say he is not William C., Harry Payne, Jock or C.V., but just plain Tom Whitney—if one dare call the translator of *The Gulag Archipelago* just plain Tom. His owner is a Dallas dress manufacturer. His jockey is Chris McCarron, who rode 87 more winners as an apprentice than did the remarkable Steve Cauthen. His father is Nashua, one of America's most honored horses, but his mother, Checkered Career, won only once in 21 starts. However, her sire, Ribot, is considered by some to be one of the few horses that deserve mention in the same breath with Man o'War.

This Saturday afternoon Esops Foibles will take that checkered resumé to the post as the favorite in the one-mile Stepping Stone Purse at Churchill Downs, the next to last prep race for the Kentucky Derby. If Esops Foibles steps nicely in the Stepping Stone, and if you are a gambler, consider taking the Derby price on him. He should be 15 to 1. That is because the Big A's, Affirmed and Alydar, have attracted virtually all the attention among 3-year-olds this spring, with Sensitive Prince, undefeated against moderate opposition and trained by the shrewd Allen Jerkens, getting most of what remains along with Believe It, who won the Wood Memorial last Saturday. In any other year Esops Foibles would be considered one of the Derby favorites, but Affirmed, Alydar and Sensitive Prince have won 12 straight major and minor races leading up to the Derby.

Esops Foibles is not much larger than a Shetland pony, standing only 14 hands high and weighing but 900 pounds. Alydar, by comparison, is eight inches taller and at least 200 pounds heavier. But Esops Foibles adores long stretches; in the last six weeks he has run down two of the longest in the country to win the Louisiana and Arkansas Derbies. Only one horse has taken both before—No Le Hace in 1972. No Le Hace was good enough to finish second in Riva Ridge's Derby.

Until mid-March Esops Foibles was an enigma. He had run a dozen races in California and won only two, his first start last May, at Hollywood Park, and then, after eight losses, a race in January at Santa Anita. Neither victory appeared to be significant.

"Esops Foibles always seemed to get himself in trouble," says Rettele, "but he had plenty of ability all along. Last summer he ran third to Affirmed in a division of the Hollywood Juvenile Stakes. He was beaten by 13 lengths; that's what the record shows. But he was in so much trouble that anyone watching it knew he was a heck of a lot better. He was bounced around, crowded and had to be checked twice by his jockey. It was a difficult race for him."

Rettele may look like a boy working at a man's job, but he is an excellent trainer, good enough to finish in the top 10 at both Santa Anita and Hollywood Park in the last two years. "My father was a jockey," Rettele says, "so getting into racing was natural. I spent 14 years working for Jack Van Berg as an assistant, and Jack is far and away the most active trainer in racing. He's on airplanes all the time, going from one track to the other. Some days Van Berg will be at three different racetracks, then call you late at night and ask about some horse or some race at the place you're at. I learned from him that you have to watch every horse in every race as closely as you can. You have to go to the paddock and look the field over—not just your horse, all horses.

"That background helped me tremendously, and now I do a lot of the same things I did when I worked for Van Berg. Esops Foibles frustrated me. I knew he could win, but everything always seemed to be going wrong. Finally, I decided it was best to get him out of California; he didn't seem to like the tracks. So I shipped him to New Orleans for the Louisiana Derby. Nobody gave us much of a chance. I knew that he'd like the long stretch at the Fair Grounds, and he did. When he beat Quadratic, nobody was too excited, but I got a certain feeling. We shipped to Oaklawn Park, and when Esops Foibles won the Arkansas Derby I started to think about Kentucky. You can compare his bloodlines with any horse in racing today and probably not match them."

Nashua, who beat 1955 Kentucky Derby winner Swaps later that summer in one of the most ballyhooed match races of all time, is 26 now and still standing at stud at Spendthrift Farm in Lexington, Ky. The sires of several other Derby favorites are also at Spendthrift: Exclusive Native (Affirmed), Raise A Native (Alydar) and Majestic Prince (Sensitive

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Esops may be pony-sized, but he's full of run



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Prince). While Nashua has sired 62 stakes winners in 18 crops of foals, he has never had a Derby winner. Most stallions are beyond their peak years after age 15, but Nashua is still producing good runners.

If Esops' sire is a blue chip, what about his dam? "If you look at Checkered Career's bloodlines," says Tom Whitney, "you will find the most interesting thing is Ribot." Ribot was undefeated—the winner of 16 races in Italy, France and England and twice the winner of one of the world's most important races, the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe. Maybe momma couldn't run that well, but her pedigree is class.

Whitney got into racing seven years ago. When he is not translating Russian or running his bookstore in Washington, Conn., he can be found poring over breeding books. "The breeding of horses is fascinating," he says. "You can't really come up with the final answer, but you may get close. I won't go to the Derby because the crowds are too big. I'll just sit at home and watch. Yes, maybe I am kicking myself a bit for selling Esops Foibles. He went for $20,000 as a weanling at Lexington. Well, you can't keep every horse you breed. The one thing I know for certain is that the man who bought Esops Foibles is an intelligent man. He doesn't own many horses, but he has done very well with the ones that he has."

Owner Jerry Frankel has 2,000 employees at his Jerell Inc. firm in Dallas. Jerell Inc. has an Employees Stock Ownership Plan. Ergo, Esop. Foibles, says Frankel, stems from Checkered Career's record. Everybody seems to like the name, according to Frankel. "They'll really like it if he wins the Derby. Running against Alydar, Affirmed and Sensitive Prince might just be an exercise in futility, but I've got to try it. I only own six horses, and when you get this close to the Derby you have to try and win it. An opportunity like this may not come up again. I've only been in racing for three years, but I'm in to stay."

As is McCarron, the Maryland jockey sensation of 1975 who has gone on to the big-money races in California and elsewhere. "When I won the Louisiana Derby with Esops Foibles," McCarron says, "a lot of people thought it was just an upset. I didn't feel that way. When we won the Arkansas Derby a lot of people dismissed Esops Foibles again. But this horse can run." **END**

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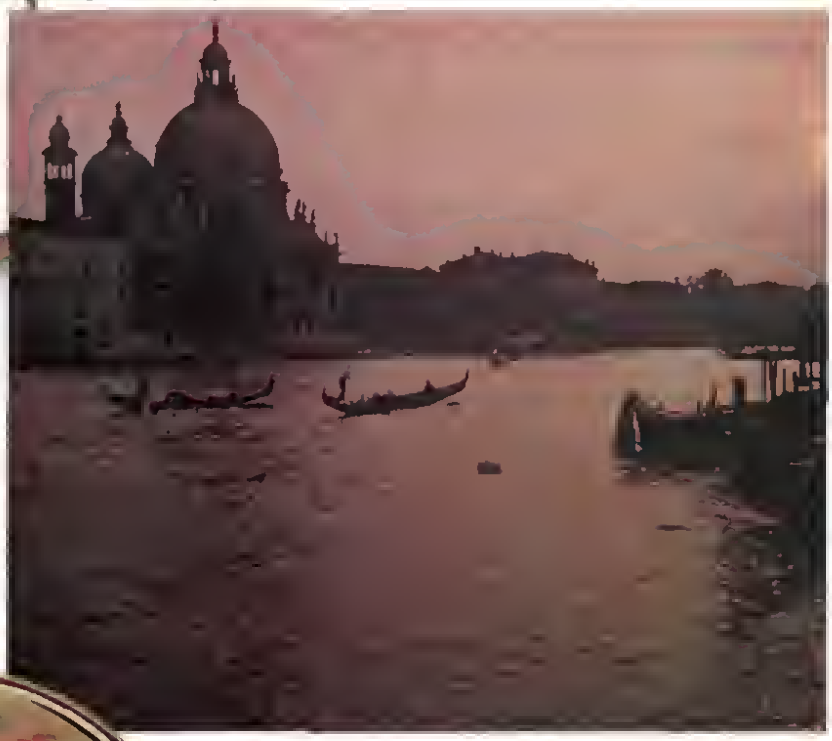


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He won the AAU title with a borrowed style, and now Greg says he, too, is the greatest



Hands held low, a la Ali, Greg Paga (right) danced his way through Tony Tubbs for the title

With one more bout to go in the national AAU boxing championships, Greg Page is lounging in his motel room at Biloxi, Miss. Page is a 19-year-old high school senior. He is also a heavyweight, with 212 pounds on a 6′ 2½″ frame. He hammers a few punches into the pillow on his bed and allows, "I don't like to say nothing"—thud, thud—"that I can't live up to." Whack.

The statement is intriguing. Perhaps Page is a modest fighter, something usually considered a contradiction in terms. If that's the case, how would Page candidly assess his abilities?

"I got Sugar Ray Robinson's smartness," he says. Wham. "I got Jersey Joe Walcott's moves, Joe Louis' jab—and Muhammad Ali's style." Thwack.

Is there anything that Greg Page might possibly be lacking?

"Not that I can think of." Thud. And modesty, always wobbly in the boxing world, is down for the count again.

There are some critics who don't have as much trouble as Page has thinking of things that he might, indeed, lack. Defense tops everybody's list. Some folks also wonder if his moves are as good as his mouth, and there is concern that he might go too quickly for professional dollars when more amateur medals and experience might serve him better for a few years.

Still, nobody disputes the fact that Page is the class of amateur boxing this season, the charismatic figure, the one who is trailed by kids with pencils raised and by grown men with pride lowered who are honored to act as go-fers. Page blitzed the field of 36 heavyweights last week, even though his road to the title was smoothed when both his quarterfinal and semifinal opponents were stricken at the last moment with physical problems and forced to withdraw. "I understand," says Page. "I wouldn't want to fight me, either."

Dr. Edwin Campbell reported that quarterfinalist Steve Zouski of Wisconsin Rapids, Wis. had a swollen hand and a bruised, possibly broken, nose. Semifinalist Ed Gregg of New York was suffering from a swollen left shoulder. There were unofficial suggestions that both fighters had contracted a new malady in the division, Pageitis.

A clue that this year's tournament belonged to Greg Page came when he failed to report early in the week for the required physical exam. Officials bent the rules—he could have been automatically disqualified—and Robert J. Surkein, AAU boxing chairman, said, "We're going to give him his first second chance."

Page didn't need any more breaks, although his final match against Cincinnati's Tony Tubbs Saturday night was no laugher. It was the fifth time in seven meetings over the years that Page has whipped Tubbs. Four of the judges awarded Page all three rounds, the fifth gave one round to Tubbs.

All through the bout Page was dancing, dancing, dancing, just like you know who. His dancing was indeed terrific; his punching was not. By the second round, although Page was established as the one who looked like the better fighter, Tubbs was landing all the punches. Page did score with a few jabs, but his right hands, with one notable exception, were short when he failed to step into his punches. He also showed a marked inability to put combinations together.

"Neither one of 'em did nothin'," said Pappy Gault, the 1968 U.S. Olympic boxing coach. Another critic of Page had a similar view: "If his fighting correlated with his *eminence*, he would have been great."

Predictably, Page, whose speed and reflexes are excellent, found nothing lack-

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ing in his performance. His opponent's punches were deficient in power, he said, and he told his trainer, LeRoy Edmerson, "If I'd had another minute, he was going, honest."

Having thus won his second straight AAU title ("Naw, it's not exciting, since I've done it before"), Page promptly began giving AAU officials the jitters by pointing out that the World Championships May 6 to 20 in Belgrade conflict with his high school prom and graduation in Louisville and that, well, he just might stay home. Nobody took him seriously, but he said it seriously. Page knows that everybody is looking at him and it is clear that he doesn't know how to react. He professes to love the public, but during the AAUs he avoided most interviews. He would roam the new Biloxi coliseum as if in search of autograph seekers and, in a broader sense, as if he were in search of an identity.

Page looks like Ali, shuffles like Ali, drops his hands like Ali, is a sucker for kids like Ali, comes from Louisville like Ali, attends Central High as Ali did—and yet has been known to take offense when somebody has the nerve to suggest that there seem to be similarities with Ali. "I feel I'm better than he is," Page says.

It is true that much of the professional heavyweight picture is not particularly inspiring. "The proof," says Surkein, "is that Scott LeDoux is ranked in the U.S." Still, there is a great disparity in opinions about Page's ability. Surkein says there are five or six pro heavyweights who could mop up Greg today. Rolly Schwartz, the 1976 Olympic coach whose blood is colored AAU, says he thinks that Page is the No. 1 heavyweight in the world and he doesn't even list a professional until his No. 6 choice, Leon Spinks.

Colonel Don Hull, longtime AAU kingpin, is asked if he thinks Page is ready to turn pro. "In the eyes of the promoters he is." Greg's uncle, Dennis Page, insists that decision is up to Greg. "He'll know when it's time." Uncle Dennis says that Page was offered $60,000 to turn pro when he was 15. That was one year after a prominent Louisville coach looked at Page and said, "He's the world's worst. He's clumsy and awkward." Retorted trainer Edmerson, "Gee, he's only a kid." And while Page is still a kid in many

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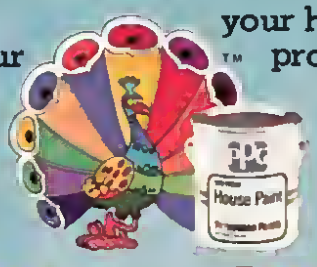
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ways, Dennis says that offers have risen to $3.5 million and beyond—to "I'll top any offer." Top Rank is hot on the trail; Boston sportsman and boxing figure Peter Fuller has made calls. "Money don't move us," says Dennis. What does move them? "That's for all of them to figure out."

When people say it's not the money, it usually is. But Uncle Dennis persists, "Peace of mind is better than a piece of money anytime. We don't want to be possessed by money. What we want is to create an overall atmosphere so Greg will say, 'Hey, this is exactly what I want to do.'"

Surkein suggests that Page, with an 81–11 record, doesn't yet have a national rep that can be marketed. "I'm all for him turning pro when the time is right," Surkein says. A nice time, he thinks, would be one day after the 1980 Olympics. "Win the gold," says Surkein, "and he can walk into a contract that will net him $10 million over two or three years." But Dennis, the emerging majordomo in the Page entourage, is not starstruck by the thought of Olympic gold. "Before then," he says, "we can get more than any medal can get us. Besides, if we are forced or pushed to do things we don't want to do as amateurs, why not at least do it for money?" The lingering hope harbored by amateur fans is that Greg may conclude that with only a couple of years until Moscow, he might as well stand to one side and let the current ranking pro heavyweights bang each other around for a while, and he will then step in to add some real gold to his Olympic gold in the fall of 1980.

Back in the motel room, a visitor accepts Page's offer of a soft drink. "That will be 50 cents," says Page solemnly. Money is never far from anybody's mind in the Page camp.

Ironically, the feeling that Page may turn in his amateur card sooner than some would like has been brought on by the AAU, which ended up getting about $500,000 from ABC in exchange for recent telecasts of 11 boxing shows. Page ended up getting exposure. Surkein says the AAU boxing fund had $22,000 in it a year ago; today it has $280,000. The general fund has been enriched by about $150,000. "We made Page," says Surkein. "Without all we've done, he'd be just another nobody."

But while attention focused on Page during the tournament, which attracted 452 boxers from around the country, eyes did drift toward Clinton Jackson, 23, the light-middleweight deputy sheriff from Nashville with the fast-draw fists. Jackson is coach of the Sheriff's Department Boxing Club, and it was thought that Clint and his posse (eight members of the Nashville club competed in Biloxi) might round themselves up a trunkload of awards. Instead, it was the posse that got ambushed, and when Jackson was left alone to guard the door he, too, was done in. All this just when it looked as if Jackson would annex his fifth straight AAU title.

The perpetrator of the crime was Roger Leonard, brother of ex-Olympian Sugar Ray. Roger, who had lost five previous fights to Jackson, had boasted before the fight, "Clinton Jackson wants to kill me, so I'm gonna burn him." That was filed by experts under idle boasts, since Leonard was not impressive in his earlier bouts, while Jackson was building on his solid reputation as a boxer's boxer, maybe the best amateur in the country. By the second round, Leonard clearly was avoiding the menacing Jackson right hook and was beating Clint to the punch. By the third round, Leonard had neutralized Jackson's power. Later, Jackson disagreed with the decision ("I won the fight and I know it") while Leonard's analysis was stuck at one phrase: "I beat him, man. I beat him. I beat Clinton Jackson." And while moments after a fight are not the best time for decision-making, Jackson said he was through as an amateur and would only fight again as a pro—if that.

Now the winners prepare to go to Belgrade. At least most of them do. Three are only 16, one year too young for international bouts. Thus, replacements have been selected for James Cullins, 106 pounds; Jackie Beard, 119; and Donald Curry, 139.

But back at Greg Page's weight (Colonel Hull thinks the public fixes on the heavies because "they make the most noise when they fall down"), hope is in full bloom. And Page is confident that he is the boss. "Nobody tells me what to do," says Greg. Uncle Dennis agrees: "If he decides to give up boxing, that's fine. After all, his basic interest is laying bricks." Thud. **END**



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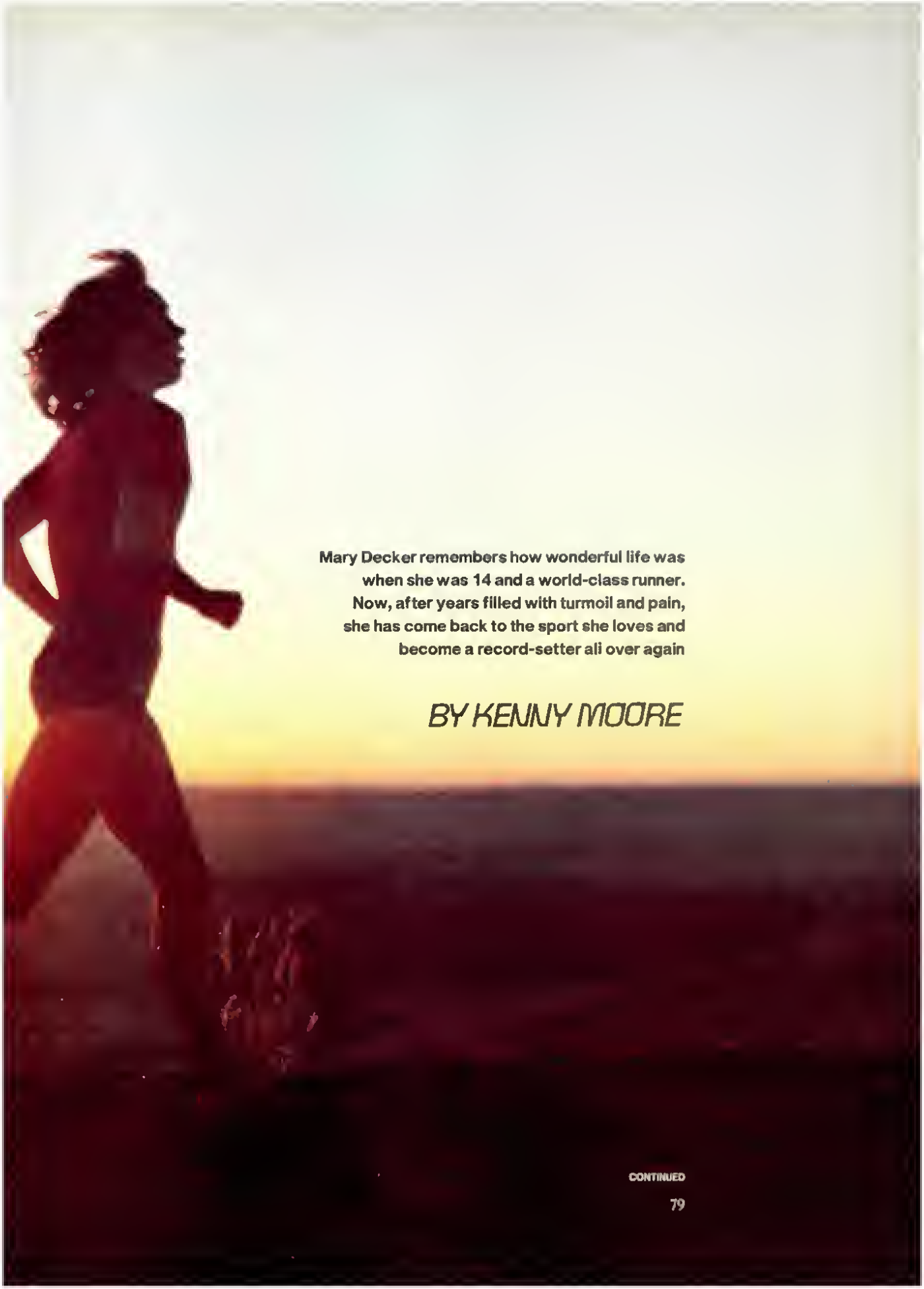
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YESTERDAY'S CHILD



Mary Decker remembers how wonderful life was when she was 14 and a world-class runner. Now, after years filled with turmoil and pain, she has come back to the sport she loves and become a record-setter all over again

BY KENNY MOORE

CONTINUED

DECKER

continued

On Aug. 4, 1973, Mary Teresa Decker was five feet tall and weighed 89 pounds, counting the braces on her teeth. She was also the best female half-miler in the U.S. On that afternoon she found herself sitting with her teammates at lunch in a hotel dining room in Dakar, Senegal, on the westernmost tip of Africa. The meal was spaghetti, the mood was uneasy, for in the evening the U.S. team would compete against the best African track and field athletes.

Suddenly conversation ceased, except for whispers. A stately file of tall black men had entered the dining room. They wore shining white robes, densely embroidered. As they proceeded between the tables, it was seen that some of them carried roses. They stopped before Mary Decker and stood motionless and solemn. She shrank into her chair.

The leader motioned that she be given the roses. Then he identified himself as an aide to Monsieur Abdou Diouf, the Premier of Senegal, and said that, because it had come to His Excellency's attention that on this day Mary Decker became 15 years old, he had sent a gift. Whereupon the aide bowed and placed before her a heavy bronze sculpture of an African soldier on a horse. It was, the emissary intoned, from the premier's private collection.

Decker turned crimson and lost all capacity for speech. Her teammates rose and sang a ringing *Happy Birthday* as the premier's men withdrew. Later she would win her race easily and be comfortable in the stadium's applause, but now Decker sat in embarrassed turmoil, staring at the bronze, fastening on its pitted surface, the result of long burial. Quietly she began to cry.

Mary Decker is 19 now, and keeps the statue in her bedroom in Boulder, Colo., along with the medals she won on that 1973 tour of Europe and Africa. She has never discovered the sculpture's history or its age. She has never tried, because for her it is a personal symbol of her exalted and vigorous youth, a youth which, given all that has befallen her since her African adventure, seems dimly of another age.

Mary, the daughter of John and Jacqueline Decker, was born and spent the first 10 years of her life in Bunnvale, near Flemington, N.J. Her father was a private pilot and a tool and die maker. "The atmosphere was dominated by my mother," says Decker. "My father is a very quiet person. My mother is a very unquiet one."

By the time Mary was 12 her parents had come to the brink of a divorce. "They stayed together for the sake of the kids," she says. "It was the biggest mistake they ever made—besides getting married in the first place. They were never close, as long as I can remember." Thus, although she recalls life with her brother and two sisters as being friendly, there was reason enough for her to seek acceptance outside her home. Friends have always been extraordinarily important to Decker, and her need to please them is strong.

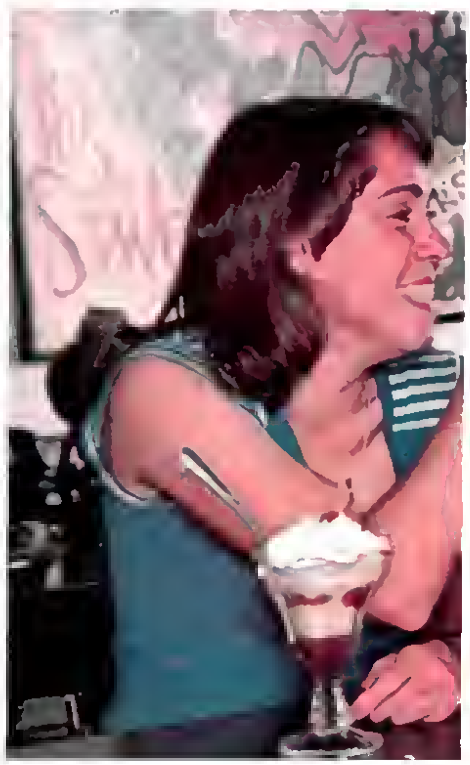
In 1968, when Mary was 10, the Deckers moved for eight months to Santa Ana, Calif., then to Huntington Beach, and two years later to Garden Grove. Decker began running at 11. "It was out of boredom," she says. "In the sixth grade my best friend and I were sitting around one Saturday saying, 'What can we do?' We had a flyer from the parks department and saw there was 'cross-country' that day. We didn't know what 'cross-country' was. We went down and found it was running, so we ran. My friend dropped out. I won—by a long ways. I don't remember its being very hard."

Decker went on to win a county-wide race that year but was sick for the state age-group meet. Nevertheless, she already had attracted the eye of Don DeNoon, a race walker who had recently become women's coach for the Long Beach Comets club. After training with DeNoon for two years, Decker set a 13-year-old age-group 880 record of 2:12.7 at the Mount San Antonio Relays. That same year she ran a 4:55 mile. Such times showed spectacular promise, but DeNoon's expectations were without limit. He and Mary's mother formed a demanding alliance. Besides doing hard speed work on the track every day, Decker was raced constantly. When she was 12, she competed in the Palos Verdes Marathon one day and ran the 440 and the 880 in an age-group meet the next. The following Saturday she ran a 440, 880, mile and two mile. The day after that she had her appendix out. "Have you been under any unusual stress?" asked the doctor.

"There was no pressure at first," Decker says now. "I enjoyed running and I always did everything my coaches said"—for that was how approval was to be won—"but when I began running well, everybody seemed to know what was best. And everybody told me something different."

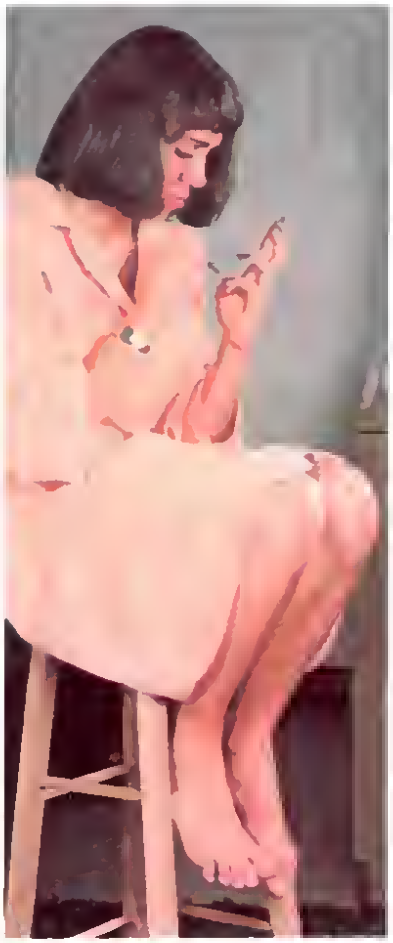
The late Steve Prefontaine, convinced that Decker was America's greatest middle-distance talent ever, worried about her guidance. "Pre called me every week or two, as a friend," she says. "Sort of a paternal friend. He said, 'Stand up for yourself. Don't run so many races.' I just ran what I was told to run. He was trying to look out for my best interests. I know that now."

In 1973, at 14, Decker was eligible to enter "open" races against the best women in the country. She ran bests of 4:37.4 in the mile and 2:02.4 in the 800, was second to Wendy Knudson in the half-mile at the national championships, won the Pan-Pacific Games 800 meters in Toron-



Sundaes with friend Steve Floto are just the thing to top off the day's training

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NANCY MORAN



Mary's nails get another coat of "rosy brown





Decker was a shoo-in for shoe store success

to and toured Europe and Africa. When the summer was over, she cried as she saw her new friends disperse. She went home to Garden Grove, caught her foot in the spokes of her bicycle and cracked a bone. She was in a cast for six weeks, and when she resumed running, it was at the same frenetic pace.

In February 1974 she set the indoor 880 world record of 2.02.4 in San Diego. In July she won the U.S. vs. U.S.S.R. 800 meters in 2:02.3, but decided not to race in Europe. "My parents were finally divorcing, and I was in the middle of that." The entente between DeNoon and Decker's mother had also broken up, and Decker entered a soap-opera period of family strife and injury and revolving-door coaches.

In the fall of 1974 she was running on the fire trails in the hills near her home when she felt a pain in her ankle. X rays showed nothing, so she flew off to compete in Japan, where she was able to run only one of her four scheduled races. On her return to the U.S., a second set of X rays showed a stress fracture. Decker spent another six weeks in a cast. Looking back, she feels it was a vulnerable time. "I grew from five feet and 90 pounds in late '73 to 5′ 6″ and 115 by the beginning of '75," she says. "I didn't know what to do with all this *body* I had." She giggles at the sound of that. "I mean in my running. My stride changed. My center of gravity changed. The stresses were different. I was ripe to get hurt."

In the Sunkist Indoor meet in January 1975, Decker developed fiery pain in her shins. "I rested. I had all kinds of therapy. I tried different shoes. I only ran on the grass. Nothing worked." The Olympic year of 1976 dawned and Decker was practically a cripple. "I knew by then that I couldn't make the team. I had gone beyond caring about that to just longing to run, no matter how badly. I thought I'd have to run in pain all my life."

The summer after graduating from high school, Decker went to Denver with a friend. "While the Olympics were on, I didn't want to be around people who knew me," she says. "All the questions, the constant, 'Why aren't you there?' " She visited Boulder, 20 miles to the northwest and hard against the Front Range of the Rockies. With its calming mountains and friendly University of Colorado students, it was the sort of place that promised refuge to a troubled Californian. She began working at Frank Shorter's sporting goods store, where all the staff runs. Decker could run only with vise-like pain. "I was born to be a runner," she says. "I simply love to train. So it was a drag when the others would say, 'We don't have to worry. Mary will hold down the store. We can go run.' "

When she could, she trained a little with the University of Colorado women's team. "She seemed pretty spacey sometimes," says Coach Rich Castro, "but when you talked about something of high priority to her, like running, suddenly she was all business." Castro took a chance and offered Decker a scholarship. She enrolled in January of last year. Without ever training at much more than a lope, she won the Big-Eight indoor 440 and was third in the 880. "On guts alone," says Castro. "She did it for the team, but, Lord, was she sick afterward, and of course every time she ran fast the pain blossomed."

A doctor in Denver had a go at her. Radiographic studies showed what appeared to be dozens of tiny, imperfectly healed stress fractures all up and down

continued

her shin bones, so she had to endure 10 more weeks of casts. When she was released, the pain was back in two days.

It must not be thought that Decker suffered all this in bitterness. Always an open, spirited person, given to infectious laughing fits, she kept her humor; it became perhaps even more manic for having no physical outlet. Shorter treasured her in his business, for her uncomplaining diligence and for her way with difficult customers.

"This big guy, a football player, comes into the store," says Shorter, "and he has these shoes he's bought, and the toes have worn out in the strangest way. I very timidly ask how he's been using them. Mary is there, smiling and curious. Finally the guy says that he's been running in reverse.

" 'You what? You run *backward*?' says Mary, and she can't help it, she laughs.

" 'Yes, of course,' says the guy, really earnest, really lecturing. 'You absolutely have to, to get stronger for sprinting. . . .'

"This sets Mary on a laughing jag. She's falling over, and everything he says is just making it worse.

" 'Listen,' he says, 'you can't consider yourself truly *fit* unless you run backward. . . .' She starts to shriek.

"Well, what could he do to this kind of gregarious, hoppity girl? Punch her out like he would have me? Finally he just turned to water and ran out of the store."

Last May, Dick Quax of New Zealand, the 1976 Olympic silver medalist in the 5,000 and a friend of Shorter's, trained for a month in Boulder before breaking the 5,000 world record in Europe. Quax met Decker and as he heard her story he grew agitated. "I had exactly the same thing," he said, displaying parallel scars on his shins. "Surgery cured it.

"It's a simple operation," he told her. "What happens is the sheath containing the muscle, called the fascia, stiffens and can't expand as the muscle does. The surgeon just slices through the membrane to relieve the pressure. I've got photos of mine, the muscle bulging out like meat out of a sausage skin. I was back running in two weeks."

Decker found a California doctor who thought Quax' diagnosis made sense. Castro paid for her plane fare, and she was operated on in July. She was running free in August. "It was such a *treat*," she says. "There hasn't been even the slightest, slightest ache."

In November she finished seventh in the AIAW cross-country championships, leading Colorado to third place in the team standings. When Castro asked Decker her goals for this year in the 800 and 1,500, she wrote down 1:58 and 4:05 (the American records are 1:57.9 by Madeline Manning Jackson and 4:02.6 by Jan Merrill). "Come on, be realistic," said the coach, thinking it would take at least two years to gain the strength necessary for that kind of 1,500. Then in January at a meet promoted by Quax in New Zealand, Decker ran 4:08.9. Four days later she equaled her personal best of 2:01.8 for 800 meters. In her first major U.S. race in three years, the L.A. *Times* Games in February, Decker broke her own world indoor 1,000-yard record by three seconds with a 2:23.8. It now appears possible that she will break four minutes for the 1,500 this year, which only three women have ever done (Olympic champion Tatyana Kazankina of the U.S.S.R. has the world record of 3:56).

One reason such fast times are possible is Decker's raw speed. She has run a 23.7 220 once. That's nearly a world-class sprint time.

"She is a physical genius," says Quax. "All that speed and she seems to be able to run all day as well. She's got no weaknesses."

Decker confirmed that point in the Toronto indoor 1,500 last February when she met the two best U.S. milers of the past three years, Francie Larrieu and Merrill. Larrieu is an old friend who respects the devotion that brought Decker through her years of travail. "I don't know if I could have hung on as long as she did," says Larrieu. "I would have given up."

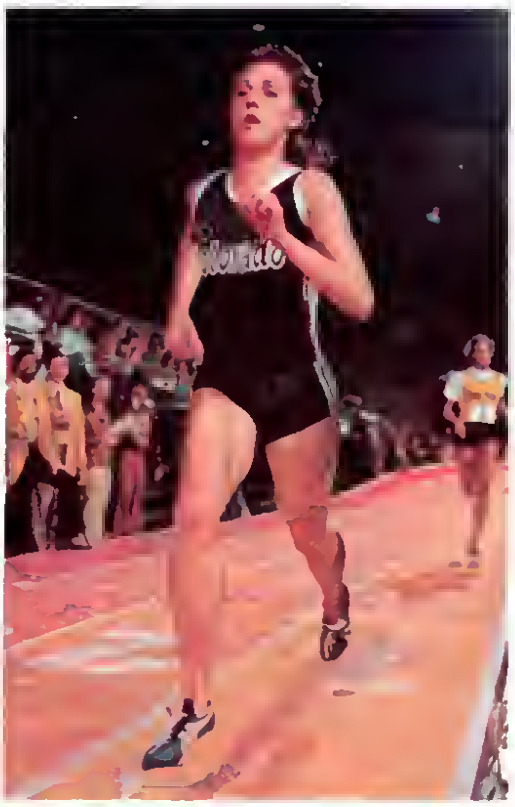
Larrieu and Decker are similar in that they confine their competitiveness to the track. Merrill is far less chummy, especially before a race.

"She won't talk to me, Francie," said Decker while warming up in Toronto. "Is she for real?"

"That's the way she is," said Larrieu.

"Aren't you kind of worried for her?" asked Decker.

Merrill and Decker traded the lead until the last two laps, when Merrill fell back. Then Larrieu came on. "With half a lap to go I was on her shoulder," recalls Larrieu. "Then Mary looked over and kind of shrugged and she pranced away." Decker won by five yards in 4:13.4. Afterward, her thoughts returned to Merrill. "Jan just never said anything, even after the race when all the tension was gone. I guess I'll just have to try harder to get to know her, because I really want to be friends. What's the fun of racing if you can't be friends?"



Decker set a 1,000-yard indoor world record in her comeback

Carved in the lintel above the entrance to the University of Colorado library is the aphorism "Who knows only his own generation remains always a child." Decker, running past the library one afternoon recently, offers the

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opinion that there is much to be said for preserving at least some of the child.

"I don't want to grow up too much," she says. "As long as I can be responsible sometimes, can't I have fun?"

Decker has always been rewarded for her childlike qualities, so it is natural that she should shed them reluctantly. "She was like Olga Korbut in 1973," says Maren Seidler, America's best woman shotputter. "Everybody's little darling. The media can cope with little girls. They love 'em because then they don't have to deal with adult women."

Thus Decker today can be characterized as two females, the serious and talented adult runner alternating with yesterday's child. "The difference between Mary-fooling-around and Mary-in-competition is the difference between Jim Nabors playing Gomer Pyle and Jim Nabors singing opera," says Rich Castro. "A complete metamorphosis."

After the indoor season, in which she got behind in her classes, Decker withdrew from Colorado for the spring semester. Since February she has carried out a program of stamina training, written for her by Quax, in which she simply runs, twice a day, through the campus and town and surrounding country. "It's the first time I've ever done any training to get strong," she says.

Decker is not fond of running alone, so her afternoon company is often Rob Yahn, a business partner of Shorter's. "I don't know what it's doing for Mary, but it's getting me in great shape," pants Yahn one brilliant day as they run through the remains of the winter's snow, their breath like cotton before their eyes. Above them the Flatirons, precipitous sandstone formations, rise like the Matterhorn against a sky so deep blue that one realizes outer space is near.

"I just hate slippery snow," says Decker. "The balls of my feet get sore from trying to grip the ground." Her stride at a 6½-minutes-a-mile pace is lovely and loose, with a little flick of the ankle as she lifts each foot—an action that soon has the backs of her legs soaked. When crossing intersections, Yahn runs in front of any waiting cars; Decker goes behind.

A blue Mustang full of kids shoots past, fishtailing on the melting snow, throwing slush on the runners. "I hope they go in the ditch," says Decker. She points out a brick and dark glass house that is said to belong to Linda Ronstadt. At the highest point in the run there is the sweet aroma of piñon woodsmoke and a view to the southeast, where Denver lies hidden under a veil of brown smog that looks especially poisonous from this clean and hard-won vantage point.

Arriving back at her apartment, Decker deftly spits beside the door before entering. She lives with Kathy Woodbridge, also a middle-distance runner. The place is filled with surfing pictures and huge grasping plants. Decker loves to sit in a hot tub after a day's running, sipping cocoa laced with peppermint schnapps. "I really am a California girl," she calls from the sloshing bathroom. "I'm always shivering up here." But Colorado is now home. "Frank and the people at the store and Rich and all the team have been so good to me, I can never repay them. There is no way I'll leave Colorado."

As soon as she began to run well in the winter, that resolve was tested. Offers came from several colleges to transfer. "I don't want to name names, but yes, there were inducements that were against the rules. Money, cars, an apartment. Rich Castro knows about it, and we both think it's a shame. At the stage women's programs are at, recruiting is a waste of money. Maybe it always is. What we need is development—better coaching, greater participation."

She comes from her bath dewy and radiant, putting on sticky lip gloss that fills the room with the smell of overripe strawberries. Decker's body language is a soliloquy of adolescent twists and stretches. Thus it is unnerving, when she rests her cheek in her hand, to examine her fingernails, which look like elegant meat hooks caked with dried blood. "The shade is called rosy brown," she says firmly, with a trace of a pout.

Judging from the dozens of telephone numbers written near the phone, Boulder's young men find her irresistible. But, she confides, too many develop ominous symptoms of seriousness. "They get persistent, and I make excuses and make excuses and they don't take the hint. I know it's kinder to say how I feel and be done with it, but it's hard, and I don't want to make enemies. So, instead, I make more excuses."

Decker and a close friend, Nancy Gregorio, who is a girls' basketball and track coach at Thomas Jefferson High in Denver, stand in the Colorado field house, watching the annual Potts Invitational indoor meet. It is Mary's duty to present the awards to the victors. "Man, are you going to kiss 'em?" asks Nancy.

"It depends on who they are," says Decker airily. She is drawn away for instructions and Nancy turns to a companion saying, "You know Mary has talents that she'll never tell you about. She macraméd all those plant holders in her apartment; she's a seamstress and a clothes designer. She even sews her own *swimsuits*."

"Nancy, are you blabbing again?" But Decker can only scold for a second; she has to give the high-hurdles winner his medal. He is tall and stands so high on the pedestal that he is too far up to kiss, unless he should bend over like a swimmer on the starting blocks, so he gets a handshake.

"And she's an artist," continues Gregorio. "She does displays down at the store and did one oil painting that was so good it was stolen. And Mary loves all the team. She invites everyone for dinner, even the outcasts."

"Wait a minute. Outcasts?"

"Well, you know. Even the little, sick ones. She's really 'fondlely,' really affectionate. I get cross-eyed when she talks to me, she's always so close." (This is true, and perhaps a small warning is in order. Should the reader ever watch a track meet with Decker, she speaking excitedly near your face, then turning her ear for your reply, the temptation will arise to whisper into that ear. If that temptation is not resisted, Decker's shoulder will instantly jerk up violently. "I'm sensitive!" she will cry, showing gooseflesh on her arm. Sensitivity like that can break your jaw.)

Decker's last award of the evening is to the winner of the half mile. He gets a kiss. It is nicely done, with Decker performing a little pirouette, twisting away as he opens his eyes. He experiences a moment of dizziness, putting a hand on the shoulder of the runner-up to steady himself.

Decker missed only one day of running all spring. That was a Sunday in March when she went cross-country skiing with John and Vickie Cossick, also Shorter associates. The first stop was a country store where Decker bought a

continued



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sack of candy bars, five discus-sized chocolate chip cookies and six sugar-free root beers. Then they all drove into the mountains, past old silver mines and feathery gray aspens rising like smoke above snowy hillsides. Across Berthoud Pass, elevation 11,314 feet, the high-country spruce were gothic. Distant ridges were burdened with snow cornices. The party skied over the gentle terrain of Devil's Thumb Ranch, a training ground for the Olympic cross-country ski team.

Decker had only been a downhill skier before, but she caught on quickly to the different techniques of cross-country. Soon she was bounding up the hills past astonished middle-aged skiers who had thought that ski touring was a relaxed, contemplative endeavor. Going downhill, Decker let loose a soul-stirring screech, beginning at about high C and rising out of the range of human hearing. "Her nickname is 'Eek,' " a teammate had said, "because on the bus she screams with joy and pent-up energy about every half hour. We try to get her to do it out the window."

Decker seemed to feel no fatigue on the trails. However, later, at a rustic lodge, sipping wine and studying pretty ski suits, she suddenly went limp, her forehead coming to rest on the cool wood of the table.

She dozed on the drive back to Boulder, perking up when Louise Shorter, Frank's wife, invited her in for a sauna. Lying on the uppermost bench, she pointed out a fresh scar, high on her left thigh. "Muscle biopsy," she said. "I turned out to be 62% fast-twitch fibers, 38% slow. But in a comparison of total area, it was 50-50." This seems to mean that she has a fine balance between speed and endurance muscle fibers. A perfect miler. Analysis of Decker's muscle chemistry shows little training adaptation. "She is capable of increasing the anaerobic and aerobic capacities of her muscles," says Ken Sparks of the Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Colorado. "This means better performances are possible." That finding supports Shorter's gut feeling about Decker's potential: "She is the best U.S. Olympic hope in *any* women's track event."

It was suggested to Mary that her forced absence from serious running may have been a blessing. "I know," she said. "Wouldn't it be horrible if I'd kept rac-

continued



"I went into the Army with the attitude that I would be a soldier. But just because I said it, didn't make me one. I had to grow into that. The whole thing has been a growing experience. The Army put me in shape, which I hadn't been. It exposed me to all kinds of people, when I had known only people who were pretty much like me. I had some tremendous guidance from my superiors, and I wanted to try and be like them. And now, in a squad leader position, I have responsibility for people, something I never had before. And that's not as frightening as I thought it would be."

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DECKER

continued

ing and was burned out by now? This way my hunger to run and my physical peak will be nearer the same time. I'm so excited about this year I just can't *wait* for those first big outdoor races."

At dinner with the Shorters, Mary and Frank compared notes on New Zealand, discussing one rather lecherous physiotherapist in particular. "I had stiff calves, so he rubbed them very nicely," said Decker. "Then he moved on to rub everything else that was rubbable. I couldn't believe it."

There was an edge in Shorter's voice. "That's maybe what you ought to try to learn," he said. "To believe it."

Later, Shorter waxed protective. "Her coaches exploited her, her mother exploited her, recruiters are trying to lure her to schools that would exploit her, and now that running has spawned an industry she's getting offers to use her name on clothing. The contracts read like articles of indentured servitude. She's smart, she hasn't fallen for any of that, so I don't know why I'm getting so worked up about it. But she has that energy, and that transparent need to please. People see that and they play on it. I guess I wish she wouldn't let them."

Decker pondered this. "I don't think I'll ever be the way Frank wants, sort of the mistress of my destiny," she said, "because I don't want to hurt other people." She was quiet for a moment. "If it comes to hurting someone else or hurting myself, I'll hurt myself. I don't know how to explain that, except to say I've been hurt so much these last four years."

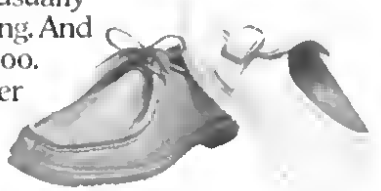
Decker has indeed been torn and broken to excess. Besides all the plaster and sutures expended on her legs, she fractured her skull in a motorcycle accident with her father when she was 12. That resulted in a year's therapy—and a scare when she ran too soon and began hemorrhaging. Twice in 1977 she was in automobile accidents, once catching a soft shoulder and rolling her car four times. She was unhurt. The other time she was a passenger in a pick-up truck that became entangled in a six-car crash on an icy mountain pass. "We were mashed beneath a jackknifed semi," she says. "I was only bruised, but the guy driving was hurt. There was glass in his arm. I couldn't get him out. And cars were still hitting us. 'If you're not moving, I'm not staying here,' I said. But I still had a cast

continued



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on my leg." She tells it as if it were a funny story, but her eyes are blank and hot, still seeing the looming machines.

Such a burden of injuries may explain some of Decker's determinedly high spirits, her acute sensitivity. It may account too for such things as the tumbleweed story. "The Colorado women's team was in a bus, going over the prairie," she says. "There were black clouds and a wind, and suddenly here were all these tumbleweeds, thousands of them, as far as you could see, running across the road, bumping into us, scratching against the windows." The others on the team, delighted, cheered and laughed. Then they turned to Decker, who was ashen and shivering, frightened to tears. Even now Decker is incapable of fully explaining her fear. "Please don't think me a crybaby," she says.

Decker does not dwell on the somber. If a theme recurs in her conversation, it is reverie. She returns often to the details of that summer when she was 14—how shotput world-record holder Al Feuerbach carried her luggage in Germany, how she was protected from the unseemly advances of Italian men by a quartet of wonderfully menacing black sprinters. "I remember the first time I ever got drunk, ooh," she says. "Francie fed me gin and tonics after the Pan-Pacific Games. The chaperones said, 'Mary looks so *tired*.' I got to be a team captain in Russia, but I was too small to carry the big flag, so I got a little flag." Her voice, describing this, is not the child's, but that of a tender older sister. "I remember in Africa there was a dispute over some ticket arrangements and some of our black guys left early in a huff. I was interviewed by the Senegal press, and they asked, 'Are they prejudiced?' 'How could they be?' I said. 'They're all black like you.'" She closes her eyes, suppressing a smile.

"I remember a time on a beach in Africa, when all the weight men were seeing how high they could throw me. And body surfing with Mac Wilkins. Afterward the pavement was so hot on my feet that he carried me back to the hotel on his shoulders." Thus delivered from the sea by her great and gentle discus thrower, she received her roses and bronze statue from the premier. "It seems now that I saw all of that through a window," she says. "It would be fun to go back and do it for real." END



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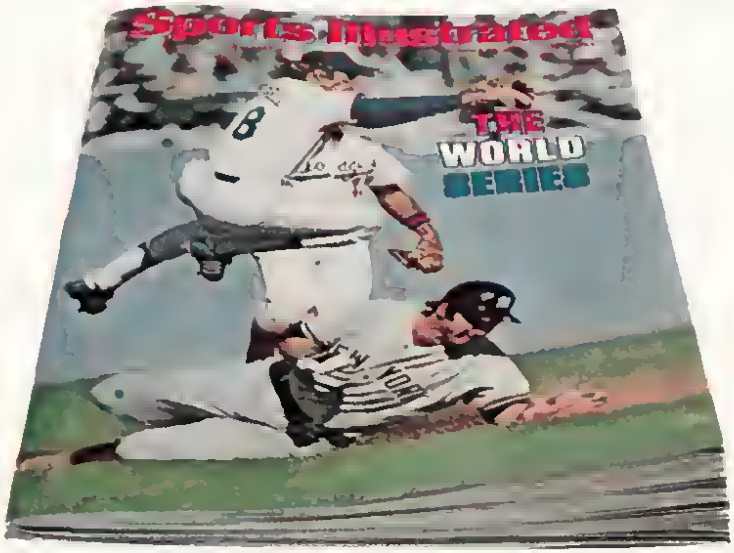


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FOR THE RECORD

A roundup of the week April 17-23

PRO BASKETBALL—"The times we beat them in the past they didn't play as a unit. They went one-on-one," the Knicks' Jim McMillian said of the 76ers. "Now they're more of a team than I've ever seen them." And Philadelphia, clearly playing as a unit, knocked New York out of the playoffs in four straight, 130–90, 119–100, 137–126 and 112–107. San Antonio won the first game of its series with Washington 114–103, then the Bullets took over and beat the Spurs 121–117, 118–105 and 98–95 for a 3–1 lead. In the Western Conference the Denver Nuggets easily won their first two games with the Milwaukee Bucks 119–103 and 127–111. But in the third game rookie Marques Johnson, with a career-high 35 points, led the Bucks to a 143–112 victory. Portland lost its first game to Seattle 104–95, won the second 96–93 but lost Center Bill Walton, whose ankle fracture will keep him out of the rest of the playoffs. In the third game the SuperSonics beat the defending champion Trail Blazers 99–84 to take a 2–1 lead in the series. (*page 20*)

BOWLING—EARL ANTHONY defeated Teata Semiz 237–192 to win his second Firestone Tournament of Champions at Akron, Ohio. It was his 30th title on the PBA tour and was worth $30,000. Anthony, Jim Godman and Dave Davis have been the only two-time winners in the tournament's 14 years.

BOXING—HUGO CORRO, 24, of Argentina wrested the WBC middleweight championship from Colombian Rodrigo Valdes, 31, by a decision in a 15-round bout in San Remo, Italy.

DANNY (Little Red) LOPEZ successfully defended his WBC featherweight championship in Los Angeles with a sixth-round knockout of Brazilian Jose de Paula.

Mexico's CARLOS ZARATE kept his WBC bantamweight title in San Juan by knocking out Andres (Pupy) Hernandez of Puerto Rico with a heavy attack in the 13th round.

At the AAU national championships in Biloxi, Miss., GREG PAGE defeated Tony Tubbs for the heavyweight title. The other winners were ELMER MARTIN, light heavyweight, JEFF McCRACKEN, middleweight, J. B. WILLIAMSON, light middleweight, ROGER LEONARD, welterweight, EICHI JUMAWAN, featherweight, DONALD CURRY, 139 pounds, MELVIN PAUL, 132 pounds, JACKIE BEARD, 119 pounds, MIKE FELDE, 112 pounds, and JAMES CULLINS, 106 pounds. (*page 73*)

GOLF—GARY PLAYER overcame a five-shot deficit and took his third consecutive tournament, the $200,000 Houston Open. He shot a three-under-par final round of 69 for a total of 270. (*page 16*)

Twenty-two-year-old AMY ALCOTT sank a five-foot birdie putt on the 1st hole of a sudden-death playoff with Hollis Stacy to win the $55,000 American Defender Classic in Raleigh, N.C. Alcott, who shot a four-under-par-68 final round for a 10-under 206 during regulation play, needed only a par 5 on the 18th but three-putted to force the playoff.

HOCKEY—NHL: The Boston Bruins took the Chicago Black Hawks in four straight. They opened the quarterfinal series with a 6–1 decision, then battled through a pair of 4–3 overtime victories and ended with a 5–2 win that left Chicago with a record 12 straight playoff losses. The New York Rangers (1968-70) and Philadelphia Flyers (1968, '69, '71) had lost 10 straight playoff games. The Detroit Red Wings beat the Canadiens 4–2 and recorded their first victory in Montreal since March 20, 1974, then lost to the defending champions 4–2 and 8–0. The Islanders won their first two games with Toronto 4–1 and 3–2 in overtime, but the Maple Leafs rallied to win the next two 2–0 and 3–1, evening the series. The Buffalo Sabres snapped a 10-game quarterfinal losing streak with a 4–1 victory over the Philadelphia Flyers, but in the next game Rick MacLeish capped a three-goal first period for the Flyers with his sixth score of the playoffs as Philadelphia defeated Buffalo 4–2 to take a 3–1 lead in the series.

WHA: About an hour before the New England Whalers' fourth playoff game with the Edmonton Oilers, Mark Howe burst into the dressing room yelling that his wife Ginger had given birth to their first child. The enthusiasm generated by the arrival of the overdue child didn't hurt grandfather Gordie, who celebrated by scoring a goal and adding an assist. Mark had two assists in a 9–1 win over the Oilers. New England went on to beat Edmonton again 4–1 and win their best-of-seven series. Quebec beat Houston 5–4 in overtime, 5–1, 3–0, then lost 5–2 to the Aeros. Winnipeg eliminated Birmingham in five games, winning the deciding match 5–2.

HORSE RACING—BELIEVE IT ($3.40), with Eddie Maple up, won the 1⅛-mile, $109,900 Wood Memorial in 1:49⅘ at Aqueduct in New York, 3½ lengths ahead of Darby Creek Road.

MOTOR SPORTS—GORDON JOHNCOCK won the USAC 200-mile race at Trenton, N.J., in a time of 1:32:04.18. A. J. Foyt was second.

DARRELL WALTRIP averaged 78.052 mph to win the $111,000 Virginia 500 Grand National stock-car race, his speed topping Richard Petty's 8-year-old Martinsville Speedway record for 500 laps by a little less than one mph.

SOCCER—The Washington Diplomats won their fourth straight match 1–0 over the Minnesota Kicks, the win putting the Dips in a tie for first place with the Cosmos in the National Conference's Eastern Division. The New Yorkers beat the Dallas Tornado 3–1, with Dennis Tueart making his debut and scoring the first goal for the winners. Vancouver and Portland are tied for the lead in the National West. Tampa Bay stayed atop the American East despite a 4–3 loss to San Jose, and Detroit gained first place in the American Central, handing San Diego its first loss, 2–0.

TENNIS—BRIAN GOTTFRIED beat Ilie Nastase 3–6, 6–2, 6–1 in the finals of the $175,000 WCT tournament at River Oaks Country Club, Houston.

TRACK & FIELD—KATHY DEVINE, a junior at Emporia (Kansas) State University, put the shot 53' 3¾" at the Kansas Relays, breaking her own intercollegiate record by 2¾'.

MILEPOSTS—FIRED: RON STEWART, 45, first-year coach of the Los Angeles Kings, who had a 31–34–15 regular-season record and two playoff losses to the Toronto Maple Leafs. Stewart will be replaced by BOB BERRY, 34, a Los Angeles left wing from 1970 to '77.

NAMED: Basketball coach at Florida State University, JOE WILLIAMS, 44, whose Furman teams have won five Southern Conference titles in the last eight years.

RULED: Unconstitutional by the Illinois Appellate Court in Chicago, a state law banning messenger-betting services. The Attorney General's Office says it will appeal the decision to the State Supreme Court.

DIED: In a plane crash southeast of Indianapolis, seven U.S. Auto Club officials, FRANK DEL ROY, RAY MARQUETTE, SHIM MALONE, STAN WORLEY, DON PEABODY, JODY PHILLIPS, RUSS TEEGARDEN, along with BRUCE WHITE, USAC medical staffer, and DON MULLENDORE, pilot.

CREDITS

4—Manny Millan. 13—drawing by SQW. 24—Dick Raphael. 26—Manny Millan; Dick Raphael; Heinz Kluetmeier. 32—illustration by Jim Flora. 37—William Stroda. 73—Tony Triolo. 82—James Drake. 93—Linsey Scott Barrington (1).

FACES IN THE CROWD



JAMES SOWEN PARKS
SUMMERVILLE, S.C.

Bo, a sophomore, struck out 20 batters while pitching his second prep no-hitter for Summerville High School, a 3–0, seven-inning defeat of conference rival Berkeley High. This season he has a 7–0 record, with 86 strikeouts in 48⅓ innings.



RENEE SCHLESENER
ESTANCIA, N. MEX.

Renee, 17, a senior at Estancia High School, is a two-time state Class AA champion in the high jump. She already has cleared 5' 5" this season. The versatile Renee is an all-state athlete in track as well as in volleyball and basketball.



RICHARD CAREY
MT. KISCO, N.Y.

Richard, now 15, holds three national 13-14 age-group records for the backstroke: 200 meters (2.08.12), plus 200 yards (1.54.80) and 100 meters (59.77). He ranks 27th in the world and 13th in the nation in the 200-meter backstroke.



SHARON SHAPIRO
ARLETA, CALIF.

Sharon, 16, became the first U.S. woman gymnast to score as many as 39.05 points out of a possible 40 at an invitational meet in Fresno, Calif. She scored 9.90 in the vault, 9.60 on the beam, 9.85 on the uneven bars, 9.70 in the floor exercise.



PETER SPOSATO
MT. VERNON, N.Y.

A shortstop for the University of Virginia, Sposato, 21, tied the NCAA record by hitting four home runs in one game. He had two in one inning, including a grand slam. He also had 10 RBIs as the Cavaliers beat Maryland 28–5.



RENITA ANN OINGLE
UPPER MARLBORO, MD.

Renita, 17, a junior at Frederick Douglass Senior High School, ran the 60-yard dash in 6.9 seconds to break her meet record of 7.2 at the Maryland State AB Indoor Track Meet, which was held at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

19TH HOLE THE READERS TAKE OVER

Edited by GAY FLOOD

HOOP FEVER

Sir

I sincerely hope that Curry Kirkpatrick is as wrong about Portland not winning the NBA championship as he was about Phoenix winning it (*Why Is This Man Eating Popcorn?* April 17)

KEN HUX
Milwaukie, Ore

Sir

I can forgive your pick of the Phoenix Suns, but I'll never understand how you could all but ignore the Denver Nuggets

STEPHEN A. MARSH
Lakewood, Colo.

Sir

Here is my vote for the Milwaukee Bucks

WILLIAM (WILBUR) MARKERT
Milwaukee

Sir:

[illegible] the Philadelphia 76ers.

STEVE MCHALE
Springfield, Va.

HOCKEY'S SPECIALISTS

Sir

In your article *Shadowers, Snipers and Superpests* (April 17) you say that Bob Gainey of Montreal is "the Shadow." If you were to ask Gainey's teammate Guy Lafleur who is the best leftwinger in hockey, I feel sure he would vote for Don Marcotte of the Boston Bruins. In their last two meetings during the regular season, Marcotte held Lafleur to a total of four shots. Marcotte also kills penalties and, in addition, has scored 20 or more goals in five of the last six seasons. If anyone deserves the Frank Selke Trophy for best defensive forward, it is Marcotte.

DON JACKSON
Quincy, Mass.

Sir:

As an avid Bruin fan, I am compelled to comment on Maple Leaf Dave (Tiger) Williams' cocky words about being tired of beating up Terry O'Reilly. I have viewed their matchups for years and I think O'Reilly must be tired of beating up on Williams.

C. J. CORBETT
Waltham, Mass.

WILLIE

Sir

I was a 10-year-old Giant fan delivering the *Daily News* in the Bronx on the morning of July 31, 1959 when I spotted a photo on the back page of a man named Willie sliding through a cloud of dusty clay across home plate. The caption read something like, "Willie . . . 4 for 4. . . ." At first I was disappointed to find that it was not my hero, Willie Mays, but another Willie in Giant garb. It was bad enough that the Giants had left New York, but now to think that someone else could assume, even for one day, the Say Hey Kid's glorious station was too much. I knew there could never be another Willie Mays.

Now, nearly 20 years later, still a Giant fan although transplanted to the South, I know there will never be another Willie Mc-

continued



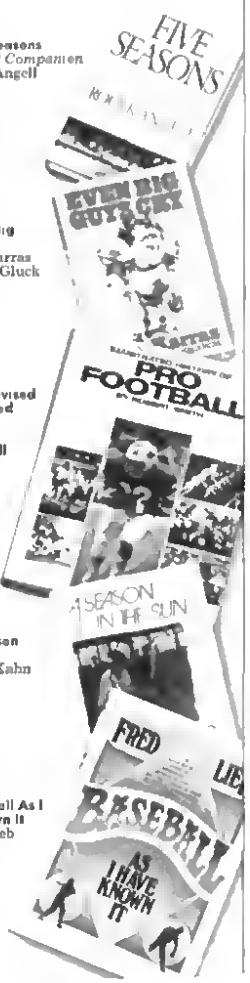
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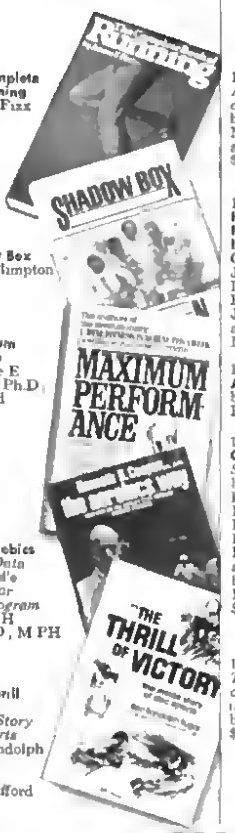
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Covey either. Thank you for honoring him so well. (*The Cable Cars, the Fog—and Willie*, April 17)

ARTHUR D. D'ALESSANDRO
Orlando, Fla.

Sir:

Your story on Willie McCovey was an excellent portrayal of one of the finest players the game has ever known. My only regret is that you did not include a picture of Big Mac swinging a bat. McCovey's swing has to be the most picturesque of any I have ever seen.

GREG FLOYD
Oneonta, N.Y.

Sir:

You have it all wrong! Willie McCovey isn't associated with such San Francisco landmarks as cable cars or fog. When he swings his bat, it's more like the 1906 earthquake.

ALAN R. EAGLE
Los Altos Hills, Calif.

CAREW AND FOSTER

Sir:

Your April 10 cover photograph of George Foster and Rod Carew spotlighted two remarkably gifted athletes, and Jim Kaplan's statistical breakdown was the best I've seen on them. But there are several incredible numbers on Carew that weren't included. Carew hit .388—239 hits in 616 at bats. Lyman Bostock, who finished second in the AL averages at .336, could have had 50 hits (and at bats) added to his season total and still have been below Carew. NL batting leader Dave Parker could have tacked on 52 hits (and at bats) and still fallen short of Carew.

Much has been said about the gap between Carew's average and the "magic" level of .400, but let's examine his .388 more closely. Had he batted an additional 100 times but gotten no more hits, he still would have averaged .334. And had he batted an additional 180 times with no hits, he would have averaged .300. Rod Carew is a superb hitter. He had a splendid season. Never mind .400.

RON GORDON
Redwood City, Calif.

Sir:

While listing the accomplishments of Rod Carew you neglected to mention that few, if any, major league first basemen had higher fielding percentages last season. Carew didn't win the Gold Glove, but he should have.

JIM WEIGERT
New York City

• Carew fielded .994, just below the .995 averages of league-leading first basemen John Mayberry of the Royals (AL) and Steve Garvey of the Dodgers (NL). As for the Gold Glove awards, Garvey won in the National League and Jim Spencer in 1991 for the White Sox) in the American.—ED.

Sir:

You stated that Rod Carew's 16 career steals of home are a major league record. While Carew is the leader among active players, Ty Cobb heads the all-time list with 35. Carew currently ranks 12th behind Cobb, George Burns (27), Frank Schulte (22), Johnny Evers (21), Jackie Robinson (19), Frank Frisch (19), George Sisler (19), Jimmy Sheckard (18), Eddie Collins (17), Joe Tinker (17) and Larry Doyle (17).

STEVEN JARRETT
Kokomo, Ind.

Sir:

Trivia buffs may wish to note that George Foster's initial claim to fame was that Willie Mays was pinch-hitting for him on Sept. 22, 1969 when Mays hit his 600th home run.

MARK POTASH
Columbia, Mo.

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